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A

GOOD LIFE,

see vol. 11. page 262.

EXTRACTED FROM

THE TRUE PLAN OF A LIVING TEMPLE,

Joseph Dowe Prop.

OR

MAN CONSIDERED IN HIS PROPER RELATION
TO THE ORDINARY OCCUPATIONS
AND PURSUITS OF LIFE.

Rec'd. at the Dep. Apl 6 1837

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE MORNING AND EVENING SACRIFICE; — THE LAST SUPPER; — AND FAREWELL TO TIME.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY JOHN BRAZER.

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Cambridge Press:
Metcalf, Torry, & Ballou.

TO

AMOS LAWRENCE, Esq.,

Boston, Mass.;

THIS REPRINT OF A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON

"A GOOD LIFE,"

Is Inscribed,

NOT MERELY AS AN APPROPRIATE TRIBUTE OF RESPECT, BUT AS A SLIGHT MEMORIAL OF THE EARLY, UNWAVERING, AND UNABATED FRIENDSHIP, WITH WHICH HE HAS FAVORED AND HONORED

THE EDITOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

The Editor hopes that he is not undertaking a superfluous task, in preparing for publication here this Reprint of an English book on Practical Religion. Such Treatises are always wanted, at least in the strong sense of need. Though they are far humbler in their pretensions than those which deal with the philosophy of morals, they are, if tolerably well executed, of more general utility. What most persons require, as a prerequsite to a "Good Life," is not so much an abstract discussion of principles, as to be reminded of the incumbent duty of the current day and hour, in that particular situation and province, in which, by the Providence of God, they are placed. The wide field of self-deception, unworthy self-indul-

gence, and negligent self-culture, lies within those boundaries of right and wrong, which are well established and clearly enough discerned. The extremes of good and ill desert are sufficiently obvious; offences against the public weal must be accurately described, or they could not be brought within the cognizance of prescribed laws; but it is an extremely small part of human conduct that can be thus accurately defined. All those duties, which, with no great propriety of phrase, are said by moralists to be of imperfect obligation, such, for example, as many of our personal and relative duties, our duties to our Maker, in a word, almost all our conduct as moral and religious beings, is, in a great degree, liable to be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Thus Love to God, all will admit, is a duty of primal obligation, and it is no less clear that it is to be manifested in express acts of devotion to Him, and in tokens of good-will towards His creatures. But the questions in every individual case

arise,—how, and when, and to what degree, are these specific expressions of Love to God to be exhibited? Again, Filial Duty is one of high and imperious claims. But what is it in your and my particular circumstances; and how shall it be reconciled with the other claims of society, neighbourhood, relationship, family, and home? And again, Alms-giving will be admitted as an essential branch, though it is by no means the most important one, of an active Benevolence. But in the peculiar condition in which I am placed, what is my individual duty in respect to it?—To whom shall I offer my alms,—and of what shall they consist,—to what amount shall they extend,—at what time shall they be dispensed,—and in what way shall they be conferred,—are all questions that must be answered, and here there is ample room for hesitation and mistake. Inquiries of a similar character arise in almost every part of our ordinary duties as moral agents. And then, again, claims are often so con-

flicting; motives are so mixed; the suggestions of a narrow self-love so subtle and persuasive; and, in addition to all, the line between a virtue in its perfection, and a virtue in its excess, and the limit that separates the lowest degree of any virtue from the slightest departure from it, is so indistinct, that even the most honest inquirer may be led to false conclusions. Here, then, is the debatable land in the moral conflicts of life. The abstract rule may be sufficiently clear and imperative, but the *application* of this rule, in a vast majority of instances, is necessarily liable to much doubt and mental discussion, and, in consequence, to all the deceitful casuistry of the heart. Now to apply these remarks, though it is admitted that no book of practical religion will avail to remove these inherent difficulties of deciding rightly and acting well in our incumbent duties, yet it must be granted, that the practical directions, which lead the mind to habits of thought and to an arrangement of our hours which

are friendly to serious self-communion, are extremely valuable aids, to most persons, in the conduct of a "Good Life."

It is obvious, further, that books of this description, to secure these important ends, must be especially adapted to the moral wants of the age to which they are addressed. The history of morals, and particularly of Christian morals (which, as the author of this little treatise elsewhere observes, still remains to be written in the English language), would amply illustrate this remark. The highly imaginative Mythology and authoritative precepts respecting bald external Rites of the early Oriental nations; the Esoteric teaching of the Grecian Philosophers for their initiated disciples, and their Symbolical Apothegms for the mass of the people; the inculcations of the Roman Moralists, which seem to regard man chiefly as a member of the body-politic, and to forget that he had an individuality to preserve, a spiritual nature to be cultivated, and a soul to be saved; the

alternately over-rigid and over-lax notions of the Gnostics, the delusions concerning a negleet of ordinary business, abnegation of social life, celibacy, contemplative habits, voluntary penances, blind subjection to Ecclesiastical rule, the high-toned but wild and erratic enthusiasm of the Crusades, intermixed with, and in some measure redeemed by, the day-dreams and reveries of the Mystics, which constituted the popular morality of the long period, that intervened from the promulgation of Christianity to the Reformation, so called, in the sixteenth century;—all these changes, mournful and meagre as the succession is, formed, probably, the best Ethical teaching, of which the times and the people admitted. Ever since the last mentioned era, down even to the middle of the last century, the science of morals held but a subordinate place in the writings of the best Scholars and Theologians of the period. It was referred to, for the most part, only incidentally, and not sought on its own account, in a liberal

and enlightened criticism of the Sacred Writings, and in that other revelation of the Divine Will respecting man, which is written in the essential principles of the human soul. From that time to ours, it has been pursued with a clearer insight into its true nature, with a better perception of its proper objects, with more directness of thought, and above all, with a more distinct apprehension of the great objects of life, and practical duties of man. Still much remains to be done, and will continually remain to be done. Even though the great principles of morals were well ascertained and generally received, which is by no means the fact, they would still require to be reproduced under different forms, and in various modes of illustration, to meet the constantly changing aspects of society, and the ever shifting states of the general mind. The "Whole Duty of Man," for example, well deserved its title and was a very useful book in its day, but what may have been the Whole Duty of Man a hundred and

fifty years ago, does not comprise his Whole Duty now; and if it did, it would still need to be told in a language, and to employ a style of thought and illustration adapted to the prevailing tastes and wider knowledge of our age, or it would soon be laid aside and left among antiquated and forgotten things.

It is under these impressions that this little volume is now presented to the American Public. It is, in some respects, peculiar, and is believed to be well adapted, as well by its peculiarities as by its intrinsic merits, to be generally useful at the present time.

It comprises the Fourth and concluding part of a Treatise of the Author, extending through three Volumes, entitled the "True Plan of a Living Temple; or Man considered in his Proper Relation to the Ordinary Occupations and Pursuits of Life." An elaborate account of the whole may be found in the seventy-fourth and seventy-fifth numbers of the "Christian Examiner," published the present

year, to which the reader is referred. Such portions of the "Preliminary Remarks" of the Author prefixed to this part of his work, as may be necessary to the proper understanding of his "plan," are here inserted.

"In the first part of this Work we have considered the *situation* of man as a subject of the kingdom of God,—that is to say, we have endeavoured to point out the peculiarities of that portion of the Divine dominions amidst which man holds his place, and to which his whole nature is adapted. In the second part of the Work we endeavoured to state what is the *object* proposed to man as a subject of the Divine kingdom,—that is to say, what is the precise duty given him to fulfil. In the third part of the treatise, we have endeavoured to correct some prevailing errors respecting the *mode* of fulfilling the duty prescribed to man; and have made it our study to point out what seems to us to be the true method of accomplishing that duty in the most

effectual and becoming style. And, throughout the whole of these previous portions of the Work, we have drawn the attention of the reader repeatedly and strongly to the importance of the distinction between the *object* proposed to man and the aids afforded him, by his peculiar powers and capabilities, for the due and successful discharge of his duty, because we are satisfied that the whole of this subject has been commonly treated in too vague and perplexed a manner,—and, especially, that the most mischievous misconceptions have originated in confounding the *object* proposed to man with the *best manner* of addressing himself to the attainment of that object. We accordingly again recommend to the reader to make this distincton familar to his thoughts.

"In the part of the Work on which we are now to enter, we intend to state, generally, the *rules* or *maxims* of a good life; that is to say, we intend to offer a representation or picture, under general heads,

of that degree and style of excellence which seems competent to man, and which every human being, consequently, by a due use of his powers, is capable of realizing."

* * * * * *

"Now the grand principle, which we mean to make use of throughout this last part, is the same with that by which all the preceding portions of the Work have been characterized, namely, that the most common pursuits and occupations of life form part of the duty given to man, and may thus become, by being well performed, a service done to God; so that man may be, throughout all the parts of his conduct, a Living Temple, consecrated to the true worship and service of his Creator.

"This idea flows directly from the account formerly given respeting the situation of man as a subject of the Divine kingdom, and respecting the *characteristically religious* nature by which man is distinguished; and the idea has some advantages so important and influential,

that we shall here draw the attention of the reader once more to them in one or two sentences.

"In the first place, this idea *unites* all duties, secular and religious, by exhibiting them all as parts of that true and acceptable service which God has appointed man to perform; it thus gives a fine *simplicity and entireness* to our conception of the duty given to man to fulfil; it takes away the *desecration* which, in the common mode of viewing our duty to God, seems to be attached to the ordinary but momentous concerns of daily life; and it corrects the opinions of religious men respecting those services which are more *strictly Divine*, by showing them to be but direct expressions of those religious feelings which are characteristic of man, and by the influence of which he is capable of making his whole conduct a 'sacrifice well pleasing in the sight of God,' — and of becoming, indeed, throughout his whole mode of acting and feeling, a *Living Temple* dedicated to the ceaseless worship of his Creator.

"It hence follows, that this idea is preëminently fitted to lead men to enter on the discharge of the ordinary duties of their place in life with *alacrity* and *animation;* because, with this idea of the sacred nature of such duties, the time spent in them no longer appears, as it is apt to appear to those whose minds are occupied by more contracted notions, merely as so much of their existence, which they are under the hard necessity of devoting to things that have no relation to the ultimate purpose of their being; but, on the contrary, as time spent in services which from the true duty given to man to fulfil, and by his successful discharge of which he is approving himself a faithful subject of the Divine kingdom.

"Even the *humblest duties* that enter into the lot of man thus become invested with a character of surpassing interest and grandeur; and there is none of those duties so humble, or apparently uninfluential, as not to offer itself to the mind which

has gained this habit of viewing all conduct, as an opportunity afforded to it of showing its loyalty by a service which God only may perceive and appreciate, but which, when well and perseveringly done, may be 'as pleasing in his sight' as services, that, to the eye of man, seem invested with a far grander and more important aspect.

"In a word, by far the most valuable impression, that can be given to any mind, is that which thus leads it to view *all the parts of conduct* as a service paid to God,—who has made the common occupations of life the duty that must occupy by far the greater portion of our time in this world,—and who will, therefore, view the conscientious fulfilment of these duties as a service paid to himself. Indeed there cannot be a more miserable or more erroneous impression, though unfortunately there is none more prevalent in life, than that which so commonly leads 'serious-minded men' to believe, that God has so constituted the lot of man,

that he is forced to spend by far the greater portion of his earthly existence in the fulfilment of duties, or performance of actions, which not only have no relation to his main destiny, but which are *hostile*, by the spirit which they inspire, to his greatest and final interests; and the best of all the services, consequently, that could be rendered to men, is that of convincing them, that even their most common occupations and pursuits are parts, and important parts, of the duty assigned to them, and that they are thus at all moments in a condition, by the conscientious and becoming fulfilment of these duties, to offer a testimony of their loyalty to God, and to promote the final advancement of their best and everlasting interests.*

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* A long quotation from Tucker's "Light of Nature," is omitted here. The reader is referred to the well known chapter in the Seventh Vol. of that work, entitled, "On doing all for the Glory of God." This subject has gained recently among the best practical Moralists, no small portion of the attention which it richly deserves. The Treatise of Rheinard, "On the importance of ex-

"But the truth is, that the simplest and most satifactory mode of viewing this whole subject is that which considers all the various events of life as parts of the duty assigned us by God,—which, therefore, we can discharge as services given to us by him,—and which, when so performed, become,—whatever their relative importance to other events may be,—testimonies of our loyalty, which may be as sincerely and acceptably paid by the performance of those duties which seem small and unimportant, as by the discharge of others which only *appear* more momentous to us, from the limited and partial view which alone we are capable of taking of the relative position and comparative value of events. To clearer intellects, and more extensive powers of observation, which could take

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plaining more carefully, in Moral Discourses, the Influence which Small Things have on the Mind;" the valuable section of Fenelon, in his *Œuvres Spirituelles*, and the excellent Discourse of Zollikoffer, on the same subject, are very properly commended by the Author.

in the whole plan of Nature and courses of Providence, all events would probably appear to possess *equal* importance, and to be but parts of one simple, and entire scheme, only broken down into apparently distinct portions to suit our limited and progressive powers of observation and of action. Under this view the smallest actions may be the source of the most important results; and there is no part of conduct of which we are entitled to say, that it is undeserving of our care, or incapable of being used as a testimony of our duty to God.

"In the application of this principle, the Author is anxious to avoid the common error of branching out his exhibition of duty or of a good life into a great variety of particular rules.

"The great objection to the *plan* of such works is, that they break down the *unity of life and action*, and exhibit human conduct under aspects different from those in which it is seen amidst the living scenes and animating interests of real

life. They are constructed, in fact, with a reference to technical divisions of the powers of human nature, which are derived entirely from the limited theories of darker ages, and presuppose abstractions that are entirely arbitrary and unsuited to the *simple and entire* structure which human nature really exhibits.

"And they are as useless in their applications as they are erroneous in their conception or design; for, not only are these rules insupportably tedious in the perusal, but, to be observed, they presuppose a disposition in mankind to avail themselves of their direction; but it is obvious, that where this disposition already exists, particular rules are scarcely necessary to be stated, or, indeed, cannot be applied to the constantly-varying incidents and details of life; and, on the other hand, when this good disposition is wanting, there is no chance that such rules will be consulted, or be of any efficacy, if they happen to be pressed on the notice of men. Such vast bodies of

particular rules, branched out under technical divisions, may, therefore, be a curious study to those who have a taste for such reading, but are really of no use to the multitude of men; nor, indeed, are they capable of a literal application to the infinitely-varied events that make up the usual course of life.

"The Author is, therefore, of opinion, that his object is more likely to be attained by the exhibition of a *general outline* or picture of a good life;—that is to say, of that style of conduct which man can really exhibit, and by the realization of which he is entitled to be considered as having acted up to the capabilities of the nature with which he is gifted, and as having duly availed himself of the circumstances amidst which he is placed.

"Most men, it is obvious, have no such *distinct* idea of what really constitutes a good life. They act, on the contrary, very much at random, and proceed from day to day along the stream of events, without having endeavoured to state with

themselves what is the style of conduct to which they should devote themselves, that they may secure the measure of excellence which is consistent with their powers, and suited to the peculiarities of their place in life.

"The evil goes yet farther than this; for they not only have not formed to themselves any idea or plan of conduct, or of a good life, suited to their powers and place, but most men are distracted by an idea, that there is a kind and measure of good quite distinct from the tenor of conduct which they feel themselves bound to maintain, by the daily and pressing incidents amidst which they are placed, and on the due management of which their interests, so far as this world, at least, is concerned, are suspended. In plain words, most men have an idea of an excellence which is altogether abstract and imaginary, and their minds are in a perpetual state of disquiet and contention, between what they feel that, by their place in life, they *must* do, and their con-

ception of some abstract, and ideal, and purely-spiritual excellence, which, from their erroneous modes of thought, they fancy it is their true and only *interest* to attain.

"The consequence of all this is, that men's conception of what is good in conduct seems only to dishearten and perplex them in the conduct of real transactions; and that, in pursuit of an abstract and imaginary good, they lose much of that interest in the things of this life, which would secure to them substantial worth.

"Now, to counteract this, it is the purpose of the Author, in this part of the Work, to offer such a view of a well-conducted life, as may at once present a *distinct conception*, to the minds of his readers, of such a style of conduct as all men may attain; and may, at the same time, reconcile their pursuit of earthly objects with a discharge of the duty which they owe to God, as subjects of his kingdom.

"Such a picture of conduct will at once present a clear idea to the mind of the reader; it will call him to the pursuit of an excellence, which is quite attainable, which is, in itself, of great beauty and interest, and from the prosecution of which there will result, instead of the disheartening and perplexing feelings which are attached to the pursuit of a merely abstract virtue, a constant succession of cheerful and animating emotions, derived from the consciousness of the value of the object on which our labors are expended, and from the delightful satisfaction, that, in pursuit of that object, we have before us an advantage which can be attained; and which, amidst all the varying events of life, we may be actually realizing.

* * * * * *

"With the view of exhibiting such a picture of a good life, the Author means to take the conduct of *one day* as his fundamental conception, showing what are the

natural expressions given to the different parts of a day by Nature herself, and what is the corresponding style of conduct, by the exhibition of which man should accommodate himself to the intimations of Nature.

"This fundamental conception will be afterwards varied by rules appropriate to the changing incidents which give to *different* days a character and expression in some degree distinct from that of the more ordinary tenor of life.

"This will be followed by some observations illustrative of the character of *human life in general*, and fitted, it is hoped, to suggest important rules of conduct to those who are anxious to act up to the dignity of their place in life. Some important reflections will naturally occur in this part of the discourse, respecting the peculiar character of both the *happiness* and the *virtue* which are competent to man, as an inhabitant of this apparently mixed department of the Di-

vine dominions. The difference between the Christian idea of a *perfect man*, and that which was in use among the philosophers of ancient times, will naturally draw our attention; and the treatise will be concluded by some remarks on the connexion which subsists between this outer court of the vast Temple of Nature, and the more august and enduring interests of that part of it which to us is but shadowed out by the objects and events of time.

"The Author has now only to observe, that the idea of taking the conduct of a day as the fundamental conception of this portion of his Work is not peculiar to him, though he intends his illustrations to be managed on a plan of his own. The ancient Pythagoreans, and the monkish orders of the middle ages, both proposed rules of conduct founded on the same primary conception; but to the productions of both of these the following observations seem to be applicable:

"The precepts of Pythagoras were intended for a *philosphic sect* of a very peculiar character, aimed at forming a style of conduct not entitled to the appellation of natural; and, at all events, were too rigid and uniform to be capable of application to the living and constantly-changing interests of human life.

"The monkish rules, also, were too particular, too monotonous,—that is to say, too much founded on an idea, that all days might be conducted on one plan; they were also constructed with a view to the use of persons who had the disposal of their time almost entirely at their own choice; and, above all, they aimed almost solely at the formation of a religious or devotional character.

"The purpose of the Author is different in all these respects. He wishes his directions to be not particular but general; so that they may be capable of being varied and adapted in their applications to the infinite diversity of circumstances amidst which life is constantly

placing the various individuals of mankind. He wishes, in short, rather to offer a *general* idea of what a good life should be, than to give particular rules for all the changing incidents of life; and especially, he is anxious that his scheme of conduct may be so constructed as to admit the most *ordinary duties* of life into the character of Services done to God."

This concluding observation of the "Preliminary Remarks" of the Author brings into view the peculiar feature and crowning excellence of his book. It is the "very head of the corner" of his "Living Temple." It is the *just estimate he has made of the duties of common life.* This is kept continually in view. Every thing is brought to bear on this issue. It is the *axis* thought, so to speak, on which the Author's whole scheme of Active and Social Duty turns.

Indeed, this seems to the Editor so important in itself, and at the same time so distinctive of this little Volume, that he hopes to be pardoned for introducing here

some remarks, furnished or suggested by the Treatise of the "Living Temple," and which he has already ventured on the topic in another place.*

In no one point, perhaps, are there such great speculative and practical mistakes, even among those who mean to be Christians, as in their *estimate of the ordinary duties of that particular station in which they find themselves placed in the present condition of things.* On the one hand, we see persons make religion to consist almost exclusively of the cultivation of certain states of feeling; viewing with great horror those influences which emanate from what they are pleased to call the "world;" detaching themselves, as far as possible, from all hearty concern and earnest participation in ordinary affairs; devoting themselves, often in a neglect of these interests, to a ceaseless round of religious services; hankering, with unappeasable desire, after religious

* Christian Examiner, above referred to.

excitements; and, in a word, acting continually on the principle, that the more they disengage themselves from things present, the more perfect is their preparation for things eternal.

This mistake existed, in analogous manifestations, in an Oriental Philosophy, long before the establishment of Christianity. And, in an especial manner, it dates back to a very early period in the history of this Spiritual Faith, and, in forms more or less modified by the progress of religious knowledge, has existed ever since, and will always be found the besetting infirmity of a certain order of minds. In former times, it led, as is well known, to an absolute seclusion from business; to a solitary life; to a denial of social engagements; to monkish seclusion; to an excessive multiplication of religious ceremonies; to pilgrimages; fasts; voluntary poverty; bodily maceration; and to other varieties of self-inflicted torture. And not a little of the same spirit may be seen, at the present day, in the

conduct of those who have adopted certain mystical and fanatical views of religion, which in various forms are yet, unhappily, so widely prevalent. And there is one species of this mistake, which is not unfrequently made known to those intrusted with the religious confidence of others, which is greatly to be deplored. We mean a feeling more or less distinctly developed, which is seen to pervade the minds of tender, susceptible, and serious persons, who are deeply impressed with a sense of their religious obligations,—namely, that there is something opposed or unfriendly to their spiritual progress, in those cares and duties, with which, for the most part, they are obliged, by their condition in life, to fill up their time and thoughts.

But common as these apprehensions are, and affecting and mournful as is the condition of many minds in consequence of them, they are altogether erroneous. No such necessary opposition between earth and heaven, things seen and things

unseen, things temporal and things eternal, exists, or can exist. No such abstraction from ordinary calls and cares is required, or is permitted, in the religion of Jesus Christ. This life, with all its interests and engagements, is as much a part of the "Kingdom of God," as the life to come. He it is, who has placed us here, in the precise spot and sphere in which we find ourselves, with that peculiar environment of circumstances, which solicit or claim our attention; and it is here, and here alone, and by these especial means and opportunities, that our religious character is to be formed, our religious welfare secured.

How then, it may be asked, are those very numerous and prominent passages of the Christian Scriptures to be understood, which run thus: —"Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth;" "Look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal;" "Labor not for that meat which perisheth, but for that meat

which endureth unto everlasting life"? The New Testament is pervaded by language like this; — what does it mean?

It is obvious enough, in the first place, that these passages are not to be literally interpreted, since, in this sense, they are irreconcilable with various other passages which place life, and all it is and has, before us as solemn trusts to be fulfilled, and make fidelity in a "few things" the condition of receiving "many things;" — irreconcilable with the present condition of life, which was an earlier revelation of God's will, than his recorded word; — and irreconcilable with the whole example of the Saviour, whose life was any thing almost, rather than a religious dream, a state of musing and abstraction, of mere contemplative piety and spiritual imaginings, and gave absolutely no countenance to fevered and brain-sick excitements of any kind.

What then, the question recurs, is their true interpretation? Their general import is very plain. Taken in connexion

with all those circumstances which illustrate their meaning, and viewed in reference to that whole train of reasoning which is fully developed in the treatise before us, we cannot doubt that they are intended, first, to meet and rebuke the natural propensity of our natures to become *engrossed* with present objects. They are to be considered as a strong reprehension of those who labor *only* for the "meat that perisheth" — who make the concerns of "this present" the *principal* object of pursuit. They forbid us to place our affections on things of the earth to the exclusion of things above; on things seen and temporal, so as to shut out of our view things unseen and eternal. And they are intended, in the next place, to direct our thoughts to the *ultimate aim*, the leading purpose, the prevailing object of an immotal being, — an immortal life. But, in thus giving a preëminence and ascendency to things future, they are not intended to call off our attention from things present, but

simply to assign to these their proper place in the scheme of Duty. So far from considering these immediate objects and pursuits as unworthy of our attention, still less, as sinful in themselves, or unfriendly to moral and religious progress, they teach us to consecrate and hallow them all, as parts and means of a good and holy life. They are to be regarded as essentially belonging to one vast scheme of instruction and discipline, which, beginning on earth, is intended to lead us upward to heaven, and onward through eternity. The great duty is to employ them for this object; not to desert them; not to neglect them; not to undervalue them; not to fear them; — but to assign to them their true place and purpose; to consider them as trusts; and to employ them as faithful stewards, who hold themselves accountable for their best use. In fine, they are to be carefully attended to, regarded, valued, used, enjoyed, — but, be it always remembered, not for themselves alone, not as ultimate

objects, but in subserviency, and in reference to those higher ends and aims, which centre on an eternal state. Thus are they brought within the scope of our religious obligations; thus are they rendered parts of a religious duty; thus are they all hallowed, — even the humblest and the meanest of them, — hallowed, consecrated, sanctified, as parts of that "Kingdom of God," which our Saviour announced, labored, and died to advance, and for the further advancement of which he has taught us to pray. Thus to use the things of time and sense; thus to view them in reference to the great ends they were intended to subserve; thus to make them means and agents in the formation of a high and pure religious character; thus to act "gracefully, conscientiously, kindly, and piously, even in trifles, and in the most common occupations of life;" thus to make the discharge of active offices a result and expression of Christian principles and sentiments, is to give to the Christian character its loveliest, noblest, and most perfect form.

But there is an error, opposite to that now adverted to, not less gross, and yet most prevalent, and more dangerous to religious progress. We scarcely need say we refer to that of those, who, perceiving the mistake just referred to; seeing perhaps unworthy, or annoying, or ridiculous examples of it in their own daily walk, or beneath their own roof; and feeling strongly, moreover, the mischief and absurdity of neglecting ordinary claims and cares; pass over to the other extreme, and make these claims and cares, and a regular discharge of their common engagements, the whole sum and substance of human duty,—just as if all the pursuits of this life terminated in themselves, and were to be followed for themselves alone, and had no object, significance, or use beyond themselves. Examples of this extremely low, narrow, belittling view of human concerns, meet us at every turn.

Now both these errors, opposite as they are, come from a common source.

And it is the peculiar, the distinctive praise of our author, that he has traced them both to their head-spring, and followed them into all their meanderings. There is no ethical treatise, within the compass of our reading, where this is so fully and faithfully done. Both errors, as is clearly shown, are to be referred to our ignorance or neglect of that intimate, necessary, indissoluble union, which exists between the things of time, and the things of eternity; between the duties which belong to this life, and the condition of another; between the sentiments and principles which belong to us as men, citizens, friends, husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers and sisters, and the sentiments and principles which belong to us distinctively as Christians. But this is to mistake a mere verbal distinction, adopted for the sake of perspicuity in language, for an essential difference. No such difference does or can exist. Christian graces, if the term have any definite or intelligible meaning, are cer-

tain dispositions of the soul, and moral and religious acts are nothing less than these dispositions carried into effect. The two classes of duties, if we must continue to employ the phrase, are, in their very nature inseparable; nay, they are identically the same, and they are not to be disunited even so much as in thought. Those principles and sentiments, which are commonly considered as being peculiarly religious, will be but imperfectly developed, if they be not carried into action in the midst of the ordinary duties and cares of life. This is their appropriate sphere. Here, and here alone, are they to be improved and perfected. And on the other hand, these ordinary cares and duties are all to be met and fulfilled under the guidance and influence of those religious principles and sentiments. It is thus, and only thus, that they can be well performed, devoted to holy uses, and made to become parts and aids of the Christian character. And when thus performed, when thus done in

reference to our religious obligations here, and to our spiritual destination hereafter, when thus done in a *proper spirit*,—we hesitate not to say, with the author before us, that we cannot devote ourselves *too earnestly to present objects*.

Who then is the Worldly-minded man? It is not necessarily he who gives himself with earnestness and fidelity to the concerns of this world; for this it is every man's duty to do, and is, moreover, the means, and the only means, as it has been fully shown, of preparing for another world. But it is he who gives himself exclusively to present interests, who pursues them without any reference to their connexion with his future well-being, who makes them the sole and all-absorbing objects of pursuit, whose thoughts and labors centre upon them as final results. This is the worldly-minded man. This is the true child of earth. He is thoroughly of the earth, earthy; and in this earthliness of all his desires, feelings, pursuits, plans, and objects, he has no more inter-

est, or care, or claim on the future world, than if a God-inspired soul had never been breathed into him, and a future world had never been revealed.

And who, again, is the Heavenly-minded man? It is not necessarily he who is exclusively employed in thinking on heavenly themes; nor he who detaches himself from all interest in present things, that he may become wholly absorbed in things future; nor is it he who retires from the incumbent duties of his condition in the present state, to bury himself in religious musings, and spiritual abstractions, and devotional services,—since this is to desert the sphere in which Providence has placed him, to neglect the duties which his great Taskmaster has assigned to him, and to bury the talent that was committed to his keeping; and it will signify nothing that it is inhumed in what he may deem to be consecrated earth. Still less is he a heavenly-minded man, who, shutting up all his sympathies and charities within

the enclosure of his own narrow creed, makes it his sole business to thrust this creed upon all within his reach, and, in his proselyting rage, frightens away, by his noise and violence, all the sweet Christian graces, and outrages all the common proprieties and decencies of life. This is any thing but heavenly-mindedness. But he is entitled to this high distinction, who, under a deep impression of his religious accountability, and a conviction that he is acting beneath the inspection of God, his present Witness and future Judge, faithfully, kindly, considerately, generously, honorably, attends to every incumbent duty of his place and station in life; enjoys, with a glad and grateful heart, all its innocent pleasures; and feels that he cannot be too earnestly devoted to each and all of these present interests, provided he regards them as parts of that divine discipline, which is to prepare him for higher truth and better enjoyments in those more glorious developements of God's all-comprehending

kingdom, which are not yet revealed to mortal eyes.

The author dwells, much at large, on the uses and benefits of this view of human duty. We cannot now even glance at them in detail. There are two especial advantages, however, which it presents to us, that we deem too important to be wholly passed over. One is that it gives a *definite aim* to conduct. If we could look into the minds of many persons, who are sincerely desirous of forming a religious character, and of living a religious life, we should find that their notions are extremely vague concerning what is required of them as religious beings. They are subject to a continual struggle between an impression, not easily dismissed, of the importance of the engagements of this present state, and that supremacy of regard which they cannot but feel to be due to things eternal. They are continually striving after a spiritual state and condition of character, of which they have no distinct conception, but which

they apprehend to be something wholly distinct from that palpable and visible scene of things in which they are placed. But in the "plan" here given, a definite object is proposed as the leading aim of existence; and this is the continual improvement of all our capacities, in the use and by means of all the duties and circumstances of our condition, under an habitual impression of our religious responsibleness, and in the full developement of our religious natures. This aim evidently embraces all minor aims; as there is no spiritual state or condition of character, that is, or can, or ought to be obtained, which is distinct from present objects and engagements; since, be it repeated once more, it is precisely *in*, and *by*, and *through* these, that a truly spiritual state of character is to be formed.

The other advantage referred to is this. It brings all the employments, duties, business, and true pleasures of life into one harmonious scheme, and consecrates them all to religious uses. And in

nothing is this more delightfully apparent, than in the *small duties* and minor engagements of life. These, in the estimate of those persons whose religious systems lead them to separate religion from morality, spiritual culture from actual, every-day duties, are considered as hindrances and interruptions to their religious progress, and they are seen avoiding and neglecting them, that they may give an unbroken attention to services, which they deem more specifically religious, and by which alone, or principally, a religious character can be formed. But in the view here presented, all the incumbent duties of life, the small as well as the great, nay, even the most trivial and unimportant, are equally parts of one great scheme of religious advancement. All are comprehended in the vast plan. The unobtrusive virtues and quiet graces of humble life; faithful, pains-taking cares for subsistence; the education of those committed to our trust; the care of our families; the promotion of order, peace,

and concord in the sphere of our influence, however narrow; kindness and fidelity in the circle of our social and domestic relations, however small; faithfulness in every duty, however humble; patience and acquiescence under the lesser crosses and slighter ills of life; cheerfulness and gratitude in the reception of the smallest pleasures that shine out upon us, like transient sunbeams, in the dark and weary path of humble toil; all the good that we have, or can impart to others, however trifling it may appear;—all are rendered religious acts, all receive a high consecration, all are illumined with the light of a purer and brighter world, by being used by us as a part, and an important part, of our duty as members of the universal "kingdom of God," and in habitual subserviency to those aims and hopes, that centre upon an Everlasting Life.

"And oh! when nature shrinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness, —
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard."

The Author of the Treatise of which this is a part, is anonymous, and is wholly unknown to the Editor. From some notices, however, which are scattered throughout his volumes, it appears that he is a Clergyman of the Church of Scotland. But, like many of his distinguished countrymen of the same communion, he has wisely thought that it was not incumbent upon him to protrude his peculiar speculative opinions on disputed points, in a work intended for the benefit of Christians generally; and it is, in consequence, singularly and delightfully free from what he considers the "degenerate varieties of the religious Dispositions," namely, Superstition, Acetism, Mysticism, Dogmatism, and Bigotry. The Editor, therefore, has not felt it to be necessary to alter but a single sentence in the whole train of

remark; and even this is done in conformity with the principles that are everywhere maintained in the work, and is, moreover, marked by a note where it occurs. Indeed the alterations throughout are extremely few and small, it being deemed due to the Author to permit him to present his own thoughts in his own way.

The style of the volume is by no means faultless, and it may, perhaps, sometimes be wished that certain expressions were better in themselves, and somewhat less favorites with the Author. It may, too, be desired that the sentences in general were more compact, and less prolix; and that the repetitions of the same or similar thoughts were fewer. But, notwithstanding any real or presumed objections of this kind, the Author's style is simple, unpretending, and elaborately lucid; and any of its imperfections may be more than redeemed by the absence of all pretension, affected quaintness, straining after effect, and that attempted *intensive* force

of expression, which are sufficiently common among some not unpopular writers of the present day.

And, in conclusion, the Editor has only further to observe, and he deems it one of the high recommendations of the book, that in its spirit it is truly Christian. Its pervading sentiment is bland, kind, and generous. It breathes a tone of serious, rational, comprehensive, and therefore of calm, deep, and earnest piety. It is eminently practical in its aims, and proceeds, throughout, upon the principle, "that constant virtue is ceaseless prayer." It discovers much wise observation of life, and a very clear perception of the proper aims and usual issues of conduct. On the whole, it is thought to be a good and useful book, and as such it is earnestly commended to all who are devoted to that best of all good accomplishments, and to that highest of all elevated aims,—a "Good Life."

J. B.

SALEM, MASS., Nov. 1836.

A GOOD LIFE.

DESCRIPTION OF A WELL-SPENT DAY.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE DIFFERENT SEASONS OF THE DAY.

It deserves to be remarked, that Nature herself has affixed a distinct character to the different portions of the day, which no attentive mind can altogether overlook, and which seems to point out, in a very interesting manner, the duties appropriate to these different portions.

Thus, the characteristics of the morning are stillness, freshness, renovated strength, and a re-awakening, as it were, of the energies of Nature to a new course of action and of enjoyment.

It has been finely said, that, as human life has been so constituted, that every human being,

who is born into the world, is, in one sense, "the first man" to himself, and looks upon Nature with the same feelings, as if for him, before all others, its living spectacle had been spread out,—so, also, every morning that chases the darkness of night is a continued repetition of that earliest day, when the beautiful order of Nature was completed, and her "ever-young powers" began that course, which has been beheld by so many generations with delight, and which is destined, throughout countless ages, to maintain her primeval character in undecaying vigor.

The hours of morning are, accordingly, still the freshest, and to most minds the calmest, and sweetest of the day. If this statement be in some cases reversed, and if there be minds, as we believe there are, which are more subject at this season to irritation and painful feelings, than at other times, this is merely the effect of a peculiarity of constitution, and especially of those tendencies to disease which are connected with a weak or irritable state of the digestive functions; but even to such persons, if means are taken to relieve this irritation, as by an early application of light and wholesome food, the character appropriate to the earliest hours of the day will still manifest itself in all its beauty, and Nature will be felt at that

season to offer some of her loveliest and most soothing expressions to all human hearts.

We shall immediately perceive what are the peculiar duties which this character of the "early dawn" imposes; but at present we are only employed in noticing the *expression* or *character* which Nature has attached to the different portions of the day.

The season when the first meal is taken is important, as being that when one of the most mysterious and influential of all the living functions is called into exercise; and it is accordingly of moment, that most persons should be aware, that on the propriety of their conduct at that time, the health and comfortable enjoyment of existence, at least in the case of a very great majority of individuals, depend for the remainder of the day.

To all those, therefore, to whom health is an object of importance, a due attention to the state of their digestive functions at this time ought to be recommended.

Thus much we have judged it proper to say with respect to the first and earliest portions of the day.

The character of that portion of the day, by which the hours of morning are succeeded, is not less distinctly marked by Nature than that of her earliest and freshest season. It is a season of animation and of busy enterprise; all the energies of Nature seem gradually to have attained to their most intense state; the wide face of the earth is covered by the busy multitudes of our race; the Sun himself is pursuing his course "like a giant in the heavens," and summoning all the secret agencies of Nature, even to her utmost depths, to their strongest exertions; and wherever his beams extend, the animated course of this world's affairs is run.

This then is the season in which man also is called, by the example of Nature herself, to labor and to application; and this, accordingly, is the time which mankind universally has devoted to their most important and active concerns.

Nature herself, however, having gained the summit of her glory, gradually begins to relax in her exertions; and the third season of the day has, accordingly, been very commonly devoted to physical enjoyment, to social affections, to domestic endearments, and to the indulgence of a taste for the refinements of art.

It is now that human life, especially in its civilized and highly-cultivated forms, presents some of its most agreeable and lovely aspects; and we shall have occasion, therefore, to point out more at large, in the prosecution of this subject, the rules which ought to be observed for the due enjoyment of this portion of the day; the delightful effects which, when properly employed, it is fitted to produce; and the accordance of the gratifications which it offers with the general plan which Nature presents to us, for the regulation of our conduct.

By a continued decline, through an almost imperceptible series of gradations, Nature returns from her noontide splendor to the calmness, and sober coloring of evening.

This season also, like the morning, is characterized by stillness, by soft but beautiful forms, by a disposition to repose, and by an opening up to man of those mysterious depths amidst which he holds his place, and where, from the small but lovely spot of creation, which is distinctly revealed to his eye, and made subservient to his uses, he is permitted to obtain a glimpse of those transcendent glories which beautify the Living Temple of God, and to feel his own relation to some grand

though imperfectly-understood order, with the realities of which he is, in future portions of his existence, to be made acquainted.

This, then, is evidently a season in which Nature herself seems to call us to calm thought, to a lively participation of the delights which creation, in its inimitable charms, is continually offering to our view, — and especially to a solemn anticipation of those grander scenes, of which all the present loveliness of earth is but a shadow, and where the prophetic aspirations of our wonderful and richly-endowed nature shall yet receive a constantly-progressive realization.

There are thus four distinct seasons marked out by Nature herself in the progress of the day, and each of them reminding man of some important duties which he has to fulfil, or of some indulgent bounty which Nature has permitted him to taste. Morning is the season of freshness, of renovated strength, and of calm preparation for the duties of the day. Then comes the time of active labor, of intense study, or of busy intercourse amidst the haunts of men. A season of physical enjoyment, of social affection, of domestic endearment, and of taste for art, intervenes as

a kind relaxation from the graver and more harassing pursuits of the preceding period. And evening closes the beautiful succession, amidst a gradual falling of softer shadows, and a deeper feeling of mysterious sentiments, till immortality itself seems to burst upon the human soul, from the brightening splendors of those countless worlds, by which this darkened abode of mortality is encompassed.

Morning and evening are thus both seasons of repose and of thought; but the character of the two has distinct expressions. In the earliest hours, it is thought chiefly directed to the affairs of this life, and to that course of events, by which the coming day is to be distinguished. In the latest, it is thought reposing on the delightful prospect of a world beyond the present, and called, by the opening glories of the "firmament of heaven," never entirely to lose sight of that period when all temporal things shall be succeeded by a "new heaven and a new earth."

We now proceed to point out more particularly the duties appropriate to these different portions of the day.

MORNING.

From the general character of this portion of the day, as already observed, it seems plain that the great duty appropriate to it is preparation of the mind for the more active and pressing pursuits, by which the business of the day is to be characterized; and in order to obtain this in the most effectual manner, there are several subordinate duties which seem indispensable.

In the first place, the earliest duty of the day, after that of putting the body into a becoming state of cleanliness and preparation, is the indispensable duty of *devotion*, both by devout offering up of the heart to God, and by perusing "that word" which he has stamped with his own inspiration, and given to man as his own voice made legible in human characters. This devout commencement of every day is so obvious a duty, so distinctly recommended by Nature herself, who then seems to offer her "early incense" to the great Source of all Beauty, and so admirably fitted for preparing the mind for all the coming scenes of the day, that no heart can question its obligation, nor indeed neglect it without self-reproach, and a conscious disregard of its best and most salutary privileges.

It is merely necessary, therefore, thus shortly to notice this duty, and to state that there are few situations so pressing, which, to a well-disposed mind, can be felt to be an apology for the neglect of it; and this recommendation applies not merely to the offering up of the wishes of the heart to God, but also to the perusal of that word, in which God has revealed himself as speaking to man, and calling him to the performance of all his duties.

Next to this exercise of devotion, and of listening to the Word of God, there is another duty most fitted for this portion of the day, and in beautiful harmony with that we have now recommended. It is a *quiet contemplation* of the face of Nature, and a cultivation of those sweetening and invigorating sentiments which such a contemplation cannot fail to suggest.*

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* The author adds the following notes: — "How vividly does the beautiful scenery of morning and evening often come over the imaginations, — the morbidly-sensitive imaginations, — of those who are confined by disease, especially by those diseases which more deeply agitate the feelings, and which dispose the patient to look back with desire to those lovely aspects of external nature, which he is not at the time capable of enjoying, or which he perhaps never again expects to enjoy!

"The very words, — morning and evening, — are pregnant with poetry: and, accordingly, when the poet invocates all dearest things, while preparing to sing the joys

One of the most beautiful of the ancient Pythagorean maxims was that which inculcated on the disciples of that school, that duly as the morning

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of earth, he sums up his invocation by the simple enunciation of their names: —

> 'Wake, dear remembrances! wake, childhood-days!
> Loves, friendships, wake! and wake, thou *morn and even!*' "

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"We are not friendly to the employment of the morning hours in serious business of any kind, be it active exertion or composition, or any other kind of business. According to our idea, — and we think we are following Nature, — the morning was intended to be a season, not of business, but of *preparation* for the serious duties of the day; contemplations on the scenery of Nature, devotion, quiet walking, and sober thought respecting the affairs to be transacted during the day, are, as we have said in the text, the true duties appropriated to the morning hours; and, indeed, though we, too, have composed and studied, while the rest of the world were yet asleep, we have always felt as if we were, by such employment of the early hours, withdrawing the morning from its proper duties. It is a melancholy and a dreary thing to be busy while all the world are at rest."

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"In short, we think it is bad either to employ the early hours of morning, or the late hours of evening, in business of any kind; because we think *Nature* intended that the former should be a preparation for the duties of the day, rather than the time of performing these duties them-

dawned, they should turn their eyes upon the face of heaven, and learn, "from the regularity of its movements, from its serenity, and from its cloud-

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selves; and we also think that Nature meant the calmness of the declining hours to be devoted, not to business, or composition, or study, or any of the other forms of serious duty, but to that quieting of the mind, which is good for the health of the body, and an excellent preparative for refreshing slumbers.

"We have thought it proper thus to appeal to the intimations of Nature, because the subject of the 'proper disposition of the parts of a day' is not well understood, and because keen students especially are disposed to believe, that they are employing themselves meritoriously, when they are only *violating the arrangements of Nature*, by either commencing their labors too early in the morning, or, what is still worse, by prolonging their studies throughout those hours of the night which should be devoted to rest.

"If the constitution of a person be sound, and he has the prospect of long life, he will find time enough for the pursuit of any study in which he may happen to be interested; and, if he is of a sickly frame, and cannot expect many years, there is only the more reason why he should not prematurely hasten his end by unnatural and excessive exertion.

"We owed this explanation of our ideas to ourselves also; for, unless the arrangement of the morning and evening hours now explained be maintained, our whole scheme of the employment of a day, as given in the text, will be broken up; and we are greatly mistaken if Nature is not completely on our side.

less purity," those great lessons of moral wisdom, which might dispose them to meet the events of life with a well-ordered, a composed, and a pure spirit; and if we consult the lives of the most excellent and exemplary of mankind, we shall find that this daily contemplation of the face of Nature has been one of their chief sources of enjoyment, and that from it they have derived some of the finest exercises both of their intellectual and sentimental nature.

Even a few moments devoted to this daily study are invaluable; and the Author can state, from his own experience, that there are few moments of life which have been to him the occasion of purer happiness, or to which he is disposed to look back with a more earnest wish to perpetuate the enjoyment of them. It is not merely admiration of the beauty of Nature that is awakened in such moments, but almost all the feelings, both moral

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"We cannot help adding, however, that the exercise of the morning, which we strongly recommend, ought on no occasion to be violent; and also that a great many persons will find themselves more than usually irritable during the morning; quiet exercise is the only kind they can indulge in, and breakfast ought not in their case to be long deferred after the time of rising. They have a secret irritation within them of which they are not aware, and their digestive organs require to be soothed by food."

and devotional, that are most closely allied with the best and purest state of the human heart.

The third duty of the morning is that of a serious looking-forward to the business of the day, and the formation of a plan, in so far as circumstances permit, for the prosecution of its business.

"This settlement of a plan for the duties of the day is not merely recommended," says an author of high moral wisdom, "by a regard to prudence, or because the affairs of life are likely to succeed best with the man who advances to them according to a preconceived scheme, but a regard to *moral feeling* demands the same course, for the duties which we have to fulfil each day must be distinctly conceived, and the best method of prosecuting them resolved on, if we would execute them as becomes men who are anxious to act in a dutiful and conscientious manner."

The truth is, that most men view the ordinary business of life with by far too careless and unthinking a spirit. They advance to it almost without design, and permit themselves to be carried unreflectingly along by the stream of events, whatever may be the direction it happens to take, and however momentous may be the consequences which are involved in its issue. But this is by no means the spirit in which the affairs even of this

world ought to be met; it is a solemn struggle to which man is daily summoned with many unforeseen events, the ultimate direction and influences of which he cannot determine; and no better security is given to him for the success of his enterprises, than that he should advance to them daily with a feeling that they are momentous, and that all his skill and good conduct will be necessary for conducting them so as to realize their best effects. A good and wise man, therefore, will make it his care to meet life with a serious purpose; and it is good that all men should be taught, that to meet its affairs without thought, or with no feeling of their solemnity, is unworthy of the high nature which we bear as men, and unsuitable to the important consequences that may result, either from unforeseen occurrences, or from the secret influences of even the most apparently insignificant. All the events of life are connected, and no maxim is more true or more worthy of careful consideration, than that the most serious events of our lives often have their origin in circumstances that, at the time of their occurrence, seemed to be quite casual and of little promise.

Such are the duties which seem to be appropriate to the morning, and which appear, indeed, to result from the very character which nature has given to that lovely portion of the day. They are all soothing and elevating duties, and their united effect is to *compose* the mind for the more trying events by which the progress of the day is to be distinguished, — corresponding, in this respect, with the character which Nature herself has impressed on this season, as a period of repose, of freshness, and of renovated vigor, preparatory to the more intense excitation which she is about to call forth.

We say nothing of the *length of time* which should be devoted to such duties, because that and all similar points must be determined by the peculiar circumstances in which individuals are placed. For the same reason we do not think that rules universally applicable can be given respecting the frequently-agitated question of the duty of early rising. But it seems quite clear, that whatever space we may be able to afford to such exercises, and whether our morning is to be of longer or shorter duration, the exercises we have recommended are indispensable according to our opportunities, and that those who fail altogether to improve and enjoy the hours of morning are guilty, unless bad health be their apology, of

an impropriety which cannot be reconciled with the idea of a life spent according to the best plan.

FORENOON.

This is the part of the day more especially devoted to business. Nature herself, we have already said, seems to point out this appropriation; for it is then that her energies are called forth in the most intense degree, and over all the earth this accordingly is the time when the important concerns of this world are transacted.

In general, it may be observed, that the rules of morality or of good conduct, as these are usually constructed, have little direct application to the actual business of life; these rules are, for the most part, mere *general maxims*, which touch not directly any particular point of conduct, but are viewed as applicable to the whole tenor of life. It is from this *abstract and general* form of these rules, however, that they are at once so uninteresting and of so little efficiency, and that they assume the aspect rather of *trite sayings*, which indicate the good moral disposition of those who delight to repeat them, than of *rules* which commend themselves to the observance of mankind by

their obvious relation to immediate and pressing transactions. A system of rules constructed on another principle, and directly applicable to the actual conduct of men in the management of their ordinary avocations and transactions with each other, is still a desideratum in moral wisdom, and, if well executed, would be received with much zeal by the well-disposed and actively-occupied part of mankind. The following suggestions are but a specimen of the *kind* of rules which are here alluded to: —

In the first place, every man should have a *distinct idea*, in so far as this is possible from his circumstances and particular vocation, of the precise duties required of him by his station in society, and by the calling which he follows.

It is a miserable thing for a man to live from day to day without exactly knowing what he has to do during the active portion of his day; but it is not less true, that a great many men do pass their lives in this state of uncertainty and indecision. And this arises, in many cases, not from any want of a definite character in the actual vocations of such persons, or from any impossibility of ascertaining what are the *precise duties* to which they ought to devote themselves, but simply from want of that considerate looking forward to the occupations of the day

which we have already recommended as one of the chief duties of the morning, and from consequent neglect of settling with themselves what the progress of the busy part of the day is likely to summon them to perform.

This, however, though the case of a great many men, is a fault attended with very evil consequences. It lessens in a great degree their own happiness, and gradually so far unhinges the mind as to unfit it for acting with decision amidst the pressure of events when they actually occur. It often generates a miserable feeling of utter incapacity for the duties of life, and in minds of sensibility or of constitutional timidity produces a nervous irritation and a distaste for life, which would have been prevented or completely counteracted by the simple precaution of bringing daily before the view of the mind the actual sphere of duty given to be fulfilled.

This failing is especially apt to beset those whose situation exposes them to a multitude of small duties, the exact occurrence of which cannot be anticipated; and all such persons, consequently, ought to be especially careful to state with themselves, before entering on the duties of their day, what is the precise nature of the exertions which they are called to make, and what the limits of that sphere of usefulness they have been appointed to occupy.

The observance of this rule would in many cases prevent much real unhappiness, and, in all cases, would be attended with important advantage.

In the second place, it is important to remark, that, in general, the business of life does not so much demand great exertions, as a *continued* and *persevering discharge* of a uniform, and commonly of an easily-accomplished, *series of duties;* and many important rules of conduct result from this consideration.

Thus it becomes the duty of a prudent man so to order his conduct in the management of his trust, that he may rather secure the steady, though it may be remote production of important benefits, than seek to realize great results by a few vigorous and occasional exertions. The fact is, that the good state of the world, as well as of private concerns, is maintained by the operation of general and quietly-executed laws; and it is seldom that, either in the conduct of Providence or in the fortunes of men, real and lasting changes are produced suddenly and unexpectedly. Every man, therefore, who has a trust, or fixed occupution in life, should in this respect imitate the conduct of Providence, and should seek chiefly to set such plans in operation as may be carried on easily and successfully through *a series*

of years, and ultimately produce lasting changes for good, rather than aim at forcing premature advantages by violent exertions, which either entirely fail of their purpose, or delude with the appearance of results that have no permanent stability.

For the same reason, it is important to be aware, that more will ultimately be realized by the man who is daily reaping small accessions of profit, than by him who, without attending to such remote advantages, seeks only to attain the full enjoyment of his labors by sudden and occasional exertions. Hence the smallest duties should not be neglected, nor the least important advantages overlooked.

Another result of the same general rule is, that perseverance and a steady discharge of the duties of his condition, often through long years of expectation and discouragement, ought not, however, to be neglected by the man who is desirous of fully realizing all the good which is competent to his place.

Indeed, Providence seems to have intended that this view of the necessity of perseverance and steady application, often through a long period of suspense, should be strongly pressed, by the ordinary course of affairs, on the minds of all who enter on the business of this world.

In general, it is not till *much preparation* has been gone through, and many unavailing attempts made, that men actually attain the place they are chiefly to fill in life; and after such place has been gained, most men are made to feel, that the same perseverance and patient waiting is necessary for the discharge of their duties, as for gaining the station in which these duties are prescribed to them. Nature herself seems thus to announce to men that life is a serious struggle, demanding firmness and perseverance, and a vigilant attention to all duties; and he who would execute the business of his place in society in an effectual manner ought to take his measures from these lessons, and grudge no *continuance of labor* which the circumstances of his condition may seem to impose on him. Such perseverance almost always is rewarded by the attainment of its object.

All this has been said on the supposition that Providence, both on the great scene of life and in the fortunes of individuals, seldom requires great exertions, but rather brings to pass the most valuable results by the wise and steady use of *quiet and sure-working means.* But there are also, in the third place, times and combinations of circumstances when a different course of conduct is required; and there is scarcely any man

so securely placed, or so involved in a definite round of duties, as not to be frequently, and, perhaps, unexpectedly called on to make exertions of a more extraordinary kind, and to display virtues or energies of a more adventurous and decisive cast. The times when such combinations of circumstances occur are commonly the most momentous in the life of man. They are pregnant with results of vast interest to all his future proceedings; and it is, accordingly, by the power of seizing and happily using such conjunctures, that those who have made the most splendid figure on the theatre of human affairs have chiefly been distinguished, and it is confessedly to these talents that they have owed their greatest advantages.

Even, however, in the most ordinary transactions, and in the lot of the humblest individuals, such conjunctures are occasionally occurring; times, when energy and promptitude, and courage, and high-mindedness, make themselves apparent, or are called on for their assistance; and the most successful men will always be found to be those who know best how to exert the qualities which such combinations of events demand.

Every man, therefore, so far as he is able, should hold himself in readiness for such occurrences, and should not refuse the exertion which

they demand; and hence it becomes a most important rule of life, that, when such events do occur, we should be prepared "to exercise discrimination with promptitude, to choose our measures with rapidity, and to apply them, when chosen, with energy and resolution."

In the fourth place, the business of life, to be done in the most becoming manner, requires *a union of excellencies* which are seldom found in the same individual, but the combination of which is essential to the most effectual discharge of all trusts.

Thus, the business of life ought to be done *liberally;* that is to say, under the guidance of enlarged and enlightened principles, but yet with a strict regard to *the ordinary rules* by which the mere details of action are carried on. In this respect, however, very great differences may be observed among men. There are individuals, whose views are in all cases of the most liberal kind; but they, at the same time, are not sufficiently attentive to *common forms*, and thus their liberality, from want of this grand safeguard, often exposes them to much sore and humiliating trouble. There are other men, who are scrupulously attentive to all forms, but incapable, on almost any occasion, of rising to the elevation of wide or luminous views, and hence their conduct

becomes low and severe, and they fail to gain the respect or love of those with whom they act.

There is no impossibility, however, of uniting both qualities, that is, *liberality of view* with strict *adherence to form;* and this is that perfection of conduct, after which those, who would do the business of the world in its best possible style, should constantly aim.

The great transactions and leading stations of life, at any rate, should only be intrusted to men who possess *liberality of principle;* but even the most common affairs and humblest stations will be managed in the best, the most effectual, and the most acceptable manner, by those who, with strict adherence to rule, are yet guided in all things by luminous and liberal principles.

It is, perhaps, one of the rarest things, to see these different qualities in union; but this union is the true excellence in conduct, after which men engaged in the business of life, and anxious to acquit themselves in the most becoming manner, should aspire.

Again; — the business of life ought to be done *firmly;* that is, without permitting the resolution we have taken to be weakened by circumstances; but yet it should be done with all *due regard to the feelings and interests of other men.*

Here, also, there is a great defect in the conduct, or style of acting, of many persons. On the one hand, we see men who will not be led aside from their purpose by any considerations, but who unfeelingly sacrifice the interests or happiness of other men to the promotion of their preconceived plans. And, on the other hand, there are many individuals, who, with the clearest conceptions of the justness of their own principles or schemes, are yet unable to persevere in them against the most capricious, or most wanton solicitations of others. The true mode of managing any concern, however, consists in the union *of firmness*, or a steady adherence to our own purposes, with a *tender regard to the interests of all other men*, who may be in a condition to be affected by our plans; and the actual exhibition of this combination will be found, by those who endeavour to exhibit it, to be one of the most difficult, but yet beautiful realizations, which the actual conduct of life demands.

Still farther; — the business of life should be done *vigorously;* that is, with energy, or with the whole force and combined operation of our powers; but yet, it should be done *without passion or irritation;* and here, also, as in the former case, the widest differences may be ob-

served among men, and the greatest defects in individual characters.

Thus, there are men who only act with energy when under the influence of irritation, and their conduct, accordingly, only leads to such consequences as passion and irritation usually induce. And, on the other hand, there are persons, who are so uniformly bland in their manner, but, at the same time, so destitute of energy, that they are fitted only to be trusted with affairs which can be managed by address, or by persuasion.

The true perfection of conduct consists in the union of *energetic measures* with *gentleness of manners*, and hence the force of the maxim so often quoted, and so universally felt as applicable to conduct, "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re;*" that is, "Vigorous Measures, with a calm or unirritated mode of conducting them."

In the fifth place, the great rule, to be observed with respect to all conduct, is that of viewing the faithful discharge of the duties of the station assigned us by our place in life, as a *service paid to God*, and a mean of promoting the interests of his kingdom in the world.

This, as we have repeatedly endeavoured, in the course of this Work, to urge, is by far the best style of thought to which the minds of men can be habituated. For it will destroy *the regret*

which well-disposed minds are so apt to feel, while devoting themselves to the duties of their station, as if the time spent in these duties was so much of their existence subtracted from the pursuit of the only end that is worthy of man. It will take away the *desecration* that seems to hang over the common pursuits of life, as if they had nothing in common with the true part which man, as a reasonable and moral being, has to act. It will give a *high character* to the discharge even of the humblest offices, and will make the whole of life assume the aspect of "a sacrifice" offered unto God.

Thus, the most common duties and feelings of life will assume a holy character, and man may conduct himself at all times as a "*Living Temple*," dedicated to the service of his Creator.

In the last place, the business of life ought to be done, not grudgingly or as a hard labor, but *cheerfully*, as a token of the delight which we have in doing well the part assigned us, and as a testimony of the pleasure which we feel in expressing our loyalty and fidelity to God, by the series of services to which he has called us, and by the performance of which we believe, though we do not always foresee their results, that we are best contributing to the interests of the kingdom of God. It is a pleasant thing to see a man thus

at all moments in a spirit of alacrity, ready to perform any duty that presents itself, and happy when opportunities are thus set before him, at whatever expense of his own ease, of approving his fidelity as "a servant of God;" nor is the business of life done in its most becoming and attractive style till this joyous and animated spirit is displayed in the discharge of it.

Such are some of the most important of the rules which should be observed in the management of business, and in the conduct of affairs; and the more we think of these rules, the more shall we be satisfied, that it is but seldom that we observe a character, in which the requisitions of these rules are realized.

Many men live in a constant state of *uncertainty and ignorance* respecting the precise sphere of duties assigned them.

Many fail to conduct their affairs either *liberally*, or *firmly*, or *vigorously*, or *with alacrity*.

It is but seldom that we see that *fine union of qualities* which we have endeavoured to point out as essential to a perfect style of conduct; that is to say, the liberal-minded are sometimes negligent of common rules and forms; the formalists,

on the other hand, are as commonly deficient in manly and enlightened principles; those who are resolute in the prosecution of their schemes, sometimes act cruelly towards those who seem to stand in their way, and those who are full of tenderness to men, are too easily led aside from the previously-formed convictions of their own judgment; men, who put all their vigor into the execution of their purposes, are sometimes subject to excitement and passion, and men, who possess calmness and temper, are not unfrequently destitute of that energy which is necessary for the prosecution of important purposes.

It is hence that so much excellence of character may be displayed in *the manner* of conducting affairs; and it is hence, also, that a species of morality, *more applicable to actual transactions* than the abstract and general principles so often quoted, and become so trite from use, seems still, as we said in commencing these illustrations, to be a desideratum in science.

How difficult is it to form a character disposed to look forward to the business of each day with a solemn feeling of its importance, and with a deliberate purpose of fulfilling it in the best style, pursuing that business *liberally*, but yet with strict attention to all necessary forms and rules, *firmly*, but yet without violating the feelings or

interests of others, *vigorously*, but with the utmost calmness and placidity of manner, with an habitual belief, that, in the discharge of the most ordinary duties, we may do a *service well pleasing* to God, and *joyous* in the acceptance of every opportunity of active exertion which circumstances may present!

And, if the formation of such a character be in the highest degree difficult, how much true beauty, and elevation of moral principle, is not such a character fitted to display! and how valuable, consequently, would be a system of morality, which should be available for the production of such characters!

It is hoped that the foregoing hints may, at least, show that such a system of practical morality is possible; and, perhaps, the leading topics may be found to have been noticed in the remarks that have now been submitted to the attention of the reader.

DINNER, AND THE HOURS THAT IMMEDIATELY SUCCEED IT.

This, we have already said, is the season of physical indulgence, of repose from the fatigues and agitations of business, of enjoyment of domestic affections, of social intercourse, and of taste for art.

It is to be kept in mind, however, that the gratifications of appetite, and all the lower pleasures of an allied kind, degenerate from their purpose, and fail of their object, when they are sought on *their own account*, and become the objects either of fond anticipation, or of deliberate reflection.

It is also to be remembered, that those pleasures are the most genuine and lasting which are *calmest*, which can be maintained without satiety for the longest time, or which can be made our daily solace.

It is farther of importance to be remarked, that animal pleasures, when confined to the mere indulgence of appetite, are not only of a very low kind, but almost fail to be sources of gratification; that they derive, almost in every instance, much of their power of excitation from the *social*

affections which they awaken; and that they become more genuine and valuable, in so far as they are more abundantly mingled with those delights, which flow from the higher and purer sources of our kindly and domestic charities, or of our taste for what is fine and pleasing in human art.

And, lastly, it is to be remembered, that pleasure should not be considered as *an end* valuable on its own account, but rather as a means of preparing our nature for those active and higher exertions which are truly constituent of its dignity and excellence.

These principles being admitted, it is impossible not to dwell with satisfaction on the contemplation of the scenes which are often presented by this portion of the day; and, perhaps, it is in the contemplation of such scenes that we chiefly see the advantages which spring to men from civilized and refined life. A well-supplied, but moderate and elegant table,—domestic endearment, in its most refined and tender forms,—social intercourse with others,—the charms of conversation, as it happens to turn either on the business of the day, the events of the neighbourhood, the productions of literature, or the models of art,—good humor and gaiety throughout,—and the charms of music, and of all the

other productions of art,— constitute altogether the materials of a picture, which may be found, not merely in occasional instances, but in innumerable forms, in every city, and over all the haunts of polished and civilized life, and which seems better fitted, perhaps, than any thing else to remind us, to what forms of elegance the social intercourse of men is capable of arriving, and how much true happiness is characteristic of the human condition.

In order, then, that this season of the day may be enjoyed in its utmost pefection, the following things are requisite:—

First,— that the repose and animal gratification of the hour should be sought, not for themselves, but as *a solace* from previous fatigue, and should be regarded as a preparation for the higher duties which life demands.

Secondly,— that the *heart* and *fancy* should be called on to elevate and refine the gratifications of mere animal indulgence, or that science and enlightened conversation should give occupation to the higher powers of intellect and reasoning.

And, lastly,— that when these pleasures are in their greatest abundance, and in their most exquisite forms, they should be sanctified by *gratitude* to the Fountain of all happiness, by

submissive thoughts respecting the transitory nature of human blessings, and by a *kindly sympathy* with the fortunes of those whom the bounty of Providence has not so highly favored.

In this manner, man will still be enabled to *consecrate* all his enjoyments, and to sustain the character of a Living Temple, even in those seasons when he seems to be chiefly seeking the indulgence of his own capacities of enjoyment.

The more active business of life, we formerly remarked, becomes hallowed by being done as a service appointed by God for the good of his kingdom; and the hours even of social endearment, of domestic love, and of animal gratification, become refined and *consecrated*, by being enjoyed as "a season of thankfulness" to "the Giver of all good."

EVENING.

Nature herself, as in the other seasons of the day, has given to this portion of it a character which significantly points out the duties appropriate to it. The splendid light of day begins to decline; a softer coloring spreads itself over the face of creation; beauteous tints surround

the path of the declining sun, and heaven opens its resplendent glories to the eye and heart of man.

The general duty appropriate to this season, like that of the morning, is that of a careful *composing* of the mind after the tumult and irritation of the day; but the morning, as we formerly remarked, speaks chiefly of labors about to be executed, while evening points more emphatically to those future and invisible issues to which all human labors are subservient.

This composing of the mind may, then, be best done by the following duties: —

First,— *serious meditation* on the wonderful ways of Divine Providence, and the mysterious course on which he has sent the highly-gifted race among whom we have our place.

Secondly,— careful *self-examination*,— or, as the beautiful maxim of Pythagoras expressed it, "a conscientious review of the course we have pursued, and the failings of which we have been guilty, during the day that is about to close." The excellence of this maxim has commended itself to men of all times since it was first given by its illustrious propounder, and it forms an admirable counterpart to the other maxim of the same philosopher, to which we formerly adverted, and which recommended

preparation for the duties and orderly arrangement of the business of the day, by calm contemplation of "the regularity, the serenity, and the purity of the morning sky."

In the third place,—*pleasing thoughts* respecting the beauty of Nature, and enjoyment of those lovely scenes, which the evening, in all countries, presents to the eye of man. This contemplation of the beautiful aspects of Nature may generally be best done by *solitary* musing; but to those who have been agitated or depressed by the contentions of the day, a more beneficial employment of the evening may sometimes be gained by a quiet enjoyment of rural wandering in the company of a friend. But, however indulged, this study of the aspects of Nature is one of the most healthful occupations, not for the body alone, but for the mind, in which we can be employed; and the Author can state, from his own experience, that there is no occupation that will be recollected with more pure delight.

A valley of much simple, but picturesque beauty, a "long-withdrawing vale,"—as the poet has characteristically expressed it,—marked by hoary ruins at one extremity, and stretching towards the other, along the course of a winding stream, into a fine expanse of open and varie-

gated country, characterizes his home. The landscape is bounded, at some distance, by a range of elegantly-formed and finely-verdured hills; the whole forming one of those interesting, diversified, and extensive prospects, with a rich and deep-set foreground, a softer distance of wooded and upland country, marked first by scattered country-seats, and farther west, by moorland farm-houses, and, lastly, with the elegant but towering outline of its "boundary of hills," which can be imaged only by those who have been accustomed from infancy to the picturesque forms of Scottish landscape, or who have, at least, inhabited some district where Nature assumes her bolder aspects, and unites, in her creative but fantastic moods, the grandeur of mountain-scenery with the rich setting of quiet valleys, or of softly-expanded landscape-views.

For years it has been the practice of the Author to enjoy the ever-changing beauty of this landscape, during a few moments of quiet contemplation, before beginning the business of the day,—and, indeed, in some of the first moments which the morning permits him to enjoy. And before "the shades of evening fall" on the landscape, the same indulgence of quiet meditation on the forms and colors of

Nature is repeated; no day, throughout the course of the year, presents the same aspect of this ever-lovely picture; and whether these morning and evening studies be regarded as mere indulgences of taste, as philosophical meditations, or as pious communings with Nature, the image and visible expression of Nature's God,—the Author cannot help stating in this public manner, that there are no hours of his life which return to him with such a fresh and fondly-cherished relish of enjoyment, or which he is more anxions to bring before the notice of his readers, as a sample of the manner in which every one of them may most profitably and delightfully spend some portion of the hours of every day. There is no person who may not find some aspect of Nature, around his home, which may thus bring to him many "sweet and healthful thoughts," and the remembrance of which may be a source of satisfaction and of great endearment to him, throughout all the future years of his life.

It is much to be regretted that the practices of refined life have obtruded so deeply on this valuable portion of the day, by indulgences that

are not suited to it; and that the custom of late dining prevents so many persons from availing themselves of a source of satisfaction and a means of improvement, which would far more than compensate for any pleasures of a merely animal kind, which its enjoyment might require them to forego.

In fact, good men of all times have delighted to consecrate this portion of the day to such exercises as we have been recommending; and especially those moralists, whose works have made the most lasting impression on the world, have strongly urged such an employment of it, and have exemplified it by their own daily practice. Those who are acquainted with the "Life of Fenelon" will recollect what value he attached to this duty; many of the ancient moralists have eulogized the beautiful maxims of the Pythagorean school which have a reference to this topic; and the pious and excellent Gerson has recorded, that "the season of evening is especially propitious to composure and to solemn thought, because it is that season of the day which is marked by the most beautiful colors, which shows nature in the softest coloring, and which is least exposed to those agitations which arise from the vain-glory of the world."

With most men, indeed, the evening is even a season of more perfect stillness and freedom from irritation than the morning; and it is, hence, the more to be regretted that bad habits, contracted during the agitations of the day, and the trenching of one part of its duties on another, should so generally preclude the indulgence of those pleasing and healthful thoughts which this "calm hour of day" is fitted to suggest. The value of these, however, is too inestimable to be thus foolishly abandoned; and all those, who regard the improvement and the true enjoyment of their nature as they deserve to be regarded, ought to make it their study to avail themselves of advantages, which, during the progress of life, they will find to be invaluable.

In the fourth place, we have remarked that what chiefly characterizes the evening, and especially distinguishes its aspect from that of the morning, is the tendency which it has to lift the mind to *thoughts of immortality*, or to the anticipation of those wonderful changes which the kingdom of God — of which we have been permitted to see a small but lovely portion — has yet to undergo, both in its manifestations on the face of this earth, and amidst those greater scenes with which this earth is in intimate, though invisible connexion. Indeed, it is pleas-

ing to think how regularly Nature suggests these thoughts, by the appearances which characterize the "close of a day;" and how much, consequently, it seems to have been her purpose to keep man at all times in mind of the wonderful things which are yet to follow his apparently unimportant and short-lived exertions.

Such thoughts are the sublimest, the most pleasing, and the most useful of all others, and their indulgence is one of the most important duties appropriated to this season of the day.

In the last place, the day ought to be concluded, as it was begun, by an *act of piety*, — that is to say, by devout perusal of the Word of God, and by humble prayer for his protection and blessing. Such exercises are not only the highest duties, but the noblest privileges of man; and no day can be considered as suitably spent that has not been consecrated by such exercises.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS RESPECTING THE CONDUCT OF AN ORDINARY DAY.

The foregoing outline of the method of employing the different seasons of the day has probably had a reference chiefly to those who are engaged in the details of business, and who have a definite round of duties to fulfil, and which they can arrange at their own choice. It must be remarked, however, that the Author has not aimed at giving rules applicable to *all the hours* of the day, after the manner either of the ancient Pythagoreans, or of the ascetic Authors of the scholastic times, because he writes neither for the use of a philosophic sect, nor for those who aim simply at the cultivation of devotional or religious habits. He has merely given *an outline* which may be filled up according to the circumstances of different persons, and in this view the following observations must be kept in mind.

In the first place, mankind consist not simply of those devoted to business, and having a definite round of occupations to perform; nor are those even who are thus busily employed all occupied in a similar way.

Some men have not business but study as their occupation; some have the management of public concerns, and others have the care chiefly of private and domestic interests; with a great multitude, bodily labor is the duty imposed on them; and in almost every society there are persons who have the disposal of their time entirely at their own choice, and who are at liberty to find out for themselves, from day to day, in what manner their hours shall be spent.

The same *precise routine* cannot, therefore, be prescribed to each of these; but yet all of them may avail themselves of the *foregoing outline*, which is suggested by Nature herself, and ought to adopt it with such accommodations as their peculiar circumstances render necessary or expedient.

In the second place, no routine ought to be considered *so fixed and unchangeable* as to prevent us from embracing any call to active and important duty which the changing events of life may present to us. Such calls will occasionally be made to every man, even to those whose day is most at their own disposal; and it is weakness, and an evil habit, to be so wedded to our forms, as to refuse to exert ourselves cheerfully and vigorously when any serious and pressing call is made on our activity. This is a

rule against which methodical men are apt to offend, and which is therefore the more necessary to be pressed on their attention.

In the third place, a *variety* of occupations, active exertion and study, labor and relaxation, ought to form part of the routine of every day.

Those who are intent upon the *business* of life are apt sometimes entirely to neglect the cultivation of their minds by *reading or study;* and, on the other hand, those who are devoted to *study* sometimes neglect *wholesome exercise,* or contract an unwillingness to active exertion. But a man who would spend his day in the best manner, ought to elevate and purify his mind by mixing business with study; and the meditative ought to settle it as a rule with themselves to devote some portion of their day to needful and salutary recreation.

Nor should such recreation be considered as *lost time,* or unworthy of being viewed as a service due to God. On the contrary, such relaxation being needful for the proper discharge of more serious duties, ought to be viewed as *sanctified* by the good end for which it is designed, and cheerfully indulged in from this conviction. Even in the enjoyment of innocent amusement, man may still preserve himself a "Living Temple," and have his whole day *consecrated* to the

will of God. It is a miserable and bad habit of thought which precludes any person from the indulgence of this source of satisfaction even during his hours of amusement.

In the fourth place, the great purpose of this treatise is to show that man may at all times so arrange his conduct as to maintain that character of a "Living Temple" to which we have now alluded, and also to evince that there is a style of acting which every man may point out to himself, quite sufficient to satisfy him that he is *making the most of the circumstances in which he is placed*, and consequently to relieve his mind from the depressing anxiety which is so often felt from the apprehension, that we are called to the pursuit of a good which is abstract and imaginary, and with which the ordinary occupations and amusements of life are so far from being in harmony, that they are altogether in opposition to its character, and interruptions to its prosecution.

It is obviously of great moment that men should be able to state with themselves that mode of acting, or that distribution even of the particular portions of their day, by the observance of which they know that they are employing themselves so as to realize the injunction of living a "good life;" and that they should thus

be freed from the painful anxiety, so common with sensitive and well-disposed minds, of being in pursuit of a good of which they have no distinct conception, and from the attainment of which they are precluded by even the necessary cares and innocent relaxations of ordinary life. Perhaps no habit of thought is more to be desired than that which should subvert this vague feeling, and substitute in its place the conception of a style of acting *conformable to the circumstances in which men are placed*, and which they are individually in a capacity to realize.

It is commonly said, however, that it is not possible for us to look back upon any portion of time, — not even upon the events of any one day, — without many painful feelings from a sense of our imperfections, or without a general dissatisfaction with the course we have followed.

This, however, it may be observed, would be the case, even *after the best-spent day* that it is possible to conceive a human being to go through. It is a feeling which results from the very nature of man, and from the place which he occupies in the kingdom of God; and it merely implies that happiness, that is, unmingled

happiness, is not the lot of man, even while performing or recollecting the best series of duties he is capable of fulfilling. The fact, however, is commonly so stated as to confound the necessarily *imperfect nature* of man, and of all his enjoyments, — even his most virtuous enjoyments, — with the recollection of *positive* and *voluntary guilt.* Even one day spent in a course of well-doing, is invaluable to the feelings of him who has passed through it; but it must be remembered, that, in the order of nature, important results are only gained, not by single acts, but by *habits of action;* and a *course of conduct* regulated on the principles we have been endeavouring to enforce, would not fail to bring the purest peace into the bosom of him who had been so fortunate in his life, and to reward him with many blessings which would "crown" his days with "glory and honor."

IN WHAT MANNER DAYS OR OCCASIONS OF REJOICING SHOULD BE SPENT.

In the preceding section we have given the description of a day supposed to be undistinguished by the occurrence of any unusual events, — a day such as forms the ordinary course of life, and by the rules of which, accordingly, the general tenor of life may be regulated.

But there are times when this ordinary routine is varied to every man by the occurrence of more remarkable events; and, in the first place, there are times when men are disposed to *rejoice* with their friends, or to express their thankfulness for the good that has befallen them, or for the continued repose which they have enjoyed, — times when the heart is opened by a desire to make others partake of the bounty we have experienced, and when, in this communication of our joy, we seek for ourselves that addition to our happiness which arises either from a public expression of it, or from participating it with others.

There are few men so poor as not occasionally to be able, or so wedded to their selfish gratifications as not sometimes to feel the desire, to make a feast for their friends, or to give some other token of their liberality and satisfaction.

There are few men, however, who are able to conduct themselves on such occasions with that degree of propriety which is desirable, or which is best fitted for giving effect to their liberality; and it thus not unfrequently happens, that in those seasons of rejoicing are laid the seeds of many bitter fruits of repentance and of humiliation.

There are no seasons, at the same time, the due management of which is more graceful, or beheld with purer satisfaction by those who witness such management.

And there are none, by the becoming regulation of which a better proof is afforded of that true and well-ordered goodness, which has its seat in the deepest feelings and in the most firmly-rooted habits of the human heart.

It is hence important that every man who would order his life aright should be prepared for the occurrence of such seasons, and should have rules of conduct applicable to them, from the observance of which no temptations of the moment may induce him to swerve. The general maxims, then, relating to such seasons, are the following: —

In the first place, it is good and graceful in our seasons of mirth, or of festivity, to enter

with unaffected and heartfelt *gladness* into the joy of the time. When we have been blessed with prosperity, or are, from any other cause, disposed to make a public acknowledgment of our joyfulness, nothing can be more absurd than to give to our conduct, in any of its expressions, an aspect of gloominess, or of a want of due participation in the scene before us; and, on the other hand, all men feel that there is great beauty and propriety in the conduct of him who conducts himself, on all such occasions, with that unaffected gaiety and innocent gladness of heart, which accord with the occasion on which these feelings are manifested.

Indeed, so much is this the case, that when it happens, as, amidst the uncertainty of human events, it sometimes does happen, that a secret and unexpected misfortune has occurred to him who had devoted the season to joy, it is admitted to be a rule of just conduct, that his private feelings, unless when these are of a peculiarly tender kind, should give place to the destination of the time; and he who so conducts himself, as to hide his agony, and to enter with full participation into the joys of his friends, is universally considered as having acted with a dignity and grace of the most estimable kind, even when misfortunes of the most serious na-

ture were known to himself to be impending over his lot.

But, in the second place, while our joyfulness must be thus genuine, and suited to the time, it must on no occasion be inconsistent with the *respect* which we owe to ourselves, or assume the character of extravagant and immoderate mirth.

It is not merely joy which men sometimes feel on such occasions; for joy, when genuine and unaccompanied with other feelings, seldom leads to any extravagancies of conduct; but it is undue excitement, arising from vanity, from sympathy, and from that recklessness of consequences which sometimes seizes the human heart when acting in the sight and under the influence of others; and it is hence that seasons of mirth so often degenerate into excesses, which give no real satisfaction on the review of them, but rather overwhelm with poignant humiliation those who are able to exercise their better feelings after the time of unrestrained mirth has passed.

Now, in order to avoid this, — and it is perhaps the rule of all others that is most important to be inculcated on this subject, — every man should endeavour to keep his mirth in moderation, and, indeed, to give a just and

well-regulated tone to all his feelings, when he is thus giving the reins to his thankfulness and joy. This moderation will not in the least detract from the true happiness of the time, but, on the contrary, will promote it, and be the best expression of its genuine character.

For the same reason, all intemperance should be guarded against by rules, with the observance of which *no temptation* should be considered as authorizing us to dispense. It is one of the best habits of the present times that it is favorable to the observance of this rule; and there is, therefore, in the present state of society, not only moral guilt, but bad taste in him who violates it.

It follows, from the same general rule, that we should avoid, during our seasons of gaiety, all such expressions, or symptoms of conduct, as betray the operation of ill-regulated feeling; and that it should be considered as unsuitable to the due order of the season, when we permit ourselves to lose that manly and well-adjusted moderation of language and of action, which, on occasions of less excitement, is considered indispensable to propriety of conduct.

In the third place, our joyfulness in such seasons should be *sanctified* by a feeling of thankfulness for the good we have received,

and by a sense of our own unworthiness of our peculiar blessings. These feelings will dispose us to make public acknowledgment of our piety, by those most becoming expressions of it, with which the participation of the bounty of Providence is in all countries accompanied, and will thus give to our joyfulness a far higher character than, without such feelings, it could have attained, by making it a sacrifice of gratitude to the Giver of all good, and a becoming testimony of the sense we entertain of his providential kindness.

In the fourth place, our joyfulness should be characterized by a sense of the *passing nature* of all earthly blessings. This feeling of the insecurity of our joys will be no incompatible accompaniment of the purest and most heartfelt thankfulness; nor is there any thing in it that is unsuitable to that unaffected expression of gaiety which we have already recommended as appropriate to such occasions. On the contrary, it is most suitable to the *entire* circumstances of our condition at all times, as beings who have not at any moment an entirely unmixed cup presented to us, and who know not by what unforeseen events our brightest hours of joyfulness may be clouded; and it is, accordingly, remarkable, that the songs of joy and of

festive gladness, that have made the deepest impression on the human heart, and are preserved amidst its most imperishable treasures for all generations, are uniformly those in which there is this becoming mixture of joy for the good we have experienced, and of submission to the possible decree which may soon doom our blessings to depart from us.

In the last place, our joyfulness should be accompanied by a heartfelt *participation* in the sufferings, or less favored circumstances of those who have not been equally distinguished by the bounty of Providence; and he who sits down to his well-covered table, and amidst his rejoicing friends, with the secret consciousness that he has endeavoured to make others, who feel the hard pressure of affliction, less subject to sorrow, will find, that the sweetest by far of all the ingredients of his cup is the satisfaction, which this consciousness of an active fellow-feeling with human suffering has infused.

Such are the rules or maxims relating to the due regulation of days or seasons of festivity, and with respect to these rules the following general remarks are applicable: —

First, They are so far from being abridgments of our joyfulness, that they are only fitted to preserve it in its true character, and to render it more satisfactory, both at the time of its occurrence, and at every future hour in which it returns to remembrance. It is melancholy to think how seldom seasons of festivity are remembered with heartfelt satisfaction; and it is equally true, that there is a pleasure of the purest kind attached to the recollection of those which have been kept in a proper spirit.

In the second place, the moderate, and thankful, and beneficent use of seasons of mirth, is our best security for a blessing from Providence, guaranteeing to us the continuance of them; or, if other days and darker seasons should be awaiting us, it will be a source of true satisfaction, to think that during our better hours we have not called down such reverses as a punishment for our sins, by having abused our blessings when they were in our power.

And, lastly, it is by the observance of these rules, that, even in his seasons of gaiety, and when all solemn thoughts might seem to be farthest from his mind, man may still conduct himself as a "Temple" dedicated to the

service of his Creator; and may make his times of rejoicing, as well as the other portions of his life, "a sacrifice and an offering" which God will delight to accept. Man thus continues to be a "Living Temple."

IN WHAT MANNER DAYS OF AFFLICTION SHOULD BE SPENT.

Such seasons are as much a part of the lot of man, and as much require to be provided for as those which are characterized by gaiety or mirth; for the former as well as the latter fall occasionally to the lot of every man, and together they make up that wonderful discipline by which a wisdom far finer than our own is training us for purposes, the precise nature of which we are not at present able to fathom.

"In the day of prosperity," says the wise King, "be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider." As there is then a *joy* which is natural and becoming in prosperity, and which is even "well pleasing in the sight of God," so is there a quiet and solemn *pondering* on the dispensations of Providence, and a resolute but humble searching out of our own follies and

sins, which are adapted to those seasons when a dark cloud seems to hang over our dwellings, and to sadden all our paths.

In the first place, even the *external expression* of conduct ought to correspond with the depth and solemnity of the feelings by which the heart, in such seasons, is agitated; and as there is nothing more revolting than the behaviour of those who act, amidst afflicting circumstances, as if they had no perception of the evils that have overtaken them, so the universal feelings of mankind have determined, that there is a propriety and beauty in the conduct of him, who humbles himself, even in his outward conduct, under the hand of Providence, and who is tenderly alive to those chastenings which come from a Being to whom it is the highest honor, even of the proud, to submit.

But, in the second place, it is only on occasions of very great affliction, and during the first paroxysms of sorrow, that even the maxims of the world permit us to become inattentive to the *ordinary duties and cares* of our condition. So far, indeed, is such neglect from being applauded, that it is considered as a mark of a well-ordered mind to be able, even under the pressure of severe affliction, to discharge its relative and social duties with

punctuality; and it is pleasing, in this manner, to find the *importance of these duties* recognised, and, indeed, their paramount obligation acknowledged, when the genuine feelings of the heart are called to determine respecting their comparative value, notwithstanding the inferior rank to which they are sometimes lowered, by mistaken notions of what really constitutes the chief business of life. This decision of the unsophisticated feelings of the human heart is quite in accordance, as the reader will readily perceive, with the pervading strain of this Work.

But, in the third place, while the active and social duties are thus recognised, it is incumbent on those who are pressed by the hand of Providence to enter into *communion with their own spirits*, and reverentially to place themselves in an attitude of obedience to whatever the suggestions of Providence may point out as their duty. The season of affliction ought thus to be regarded as one in which God speaks more solemnly, by the dispensations of his Providence, than at other times; and man ought, in such seasons, to feel himself called to listen with more than ordinary attention and humility to the voice which the wonderful ways of God seem to send forth.

So much for the *consideration*, or solemn searching out of our ways, which is enjoined by the Wise King, as suitable to seasons of peculiar trouble; and, with respect to the *manner* in which the affliction itself, while it endures, should be borne, the following remarks may suffice: —

In the first place, it ought to be borne *firmly;* that is to say, with all the energy the sufferer can put forth, and, especially, with a belief that God will proportion our means of endurance to the severity of the trial to which he has seen fit to call us.

Secondly, it ought to be borne *with patience;* that is to say, with a persuasion, that though it may continue longer than we had expected, or may have judged expedient, yet there *is* a time known only to God, which is the best for enabling it to effect the purpose which he has in view, and that it is the duty of man to wait patiently till the "good time of the Lord shall come."

In the third place, it should be borne under a firm belief, that no affliction is sent without some *good purpose* for which it is adapted, and that, though we may not be able, in all cases, to foresee the issue, yet a fine and perfect wisdom runs throughout all seasons of suffer-

ing, as well as through those which, to our view, bear the most apparent marks of benevolence and loving-kindness.

So much with respect to the *spirit* in which afflictions should be borne. It is, lastly, our duty *to coöperate* with Providence in promoting the purpose for which sufferings are sent; and this we may do, by viewing them as intimations of the frailties and follies that have marked our lives, and for the correction of which they were intended; especially, for lessening any undue attachment to mere temporal things, and for awakening in us the true and noble ambition of submitting ourselves implicitly to that course of discipline which God may see fit to send us, in the dispensations of his providence. Afflictions, when thus *improved*, naturally lead to the anticipation and hope of some more stable and perfect scene, where every thing, in our nature, which at present is but an expanding germ, shall ripen and "bear fruit in life everlasting."

Such is the manner in which affliction, or days of calamity, ought to be met; and, in conclusion, it may be remarked, that the sor-

row which is so borne loses by far the bitterest of its ingredients, and, indeed, not unfrequently begets in the mind that "joy of grief," which is the style of feeling most suitable to the nature and condition of man, and with the indulgence of which all his best feelings are connected.

The affliction which is so borne is also the most likely to pass away; at least, he who fails to make use of his sorrows for the purpose intended by Providence, has no reason to expect that the weight of his affliction shall be diminished till he has done *his* part in giving them their appointed efficacy, while "a morning of great beauty and calmness" often succeeds to the dark hours of those who have endeavoured to be "fellow-workers with God" for their own good.

And, lastly, it is by thus bearing his sorrows, that man continues, even amidst their heaviest pressure, to maintain the noble character of a "Living Temple," or to make even his humiliations and his griefs "sacrifices of obedience," which are well pleasing in the sight of God.

IN WHAT MANNER DAYS OR SEASONS OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES OF EXTRAORDINARY EXERTION SHOULD BE EMPLOYED.

The ordinary tenor of our days is not only varied by occasional seasons of joyfulness, and by the occurrence of calamities which call for serious reflection; there are also times in the life of every person, when a call seems to be made for more than common *activity* and *resolution;* times when circumstances thicken around us, and when we seem to be invited by the voice of Providence, speaking in the events of life, to abandon our ordinary and more indolent course, and to "gird ourselves" for duties that demand the exercise of all our vigor, or that can only be fulfilled by a temporary breaking in upon our usual habits of conduct.

When such seasons occur, the *timid* are apt to shrink from the exertion which they require, from an apprehension that they may involve themselves in labors of dangerous tendency to their usual enjoyments.

The *indolent*, also, shun such calls to activity, as unsuited to those indulgences which they delight to secure, and permit the time of exer-

tion to pass, because they cannot summon up the resolution which is necessary to break their usual love of repose.

And men of *mistaken views of piety* not unfrequently overlook such calls, from a persuasion or indistinct belief, that their best course is to leave the issue of events entirely to the direction of Providence, and to trust, that, notwithstanding their indolence, good will be made to come to them from all occurrences; or, at any rate, that if evil is determined against them, their own labors are not sufficient to avert the mischief.

And, generally, there is a most erroneous impression in the minds of men, that it is better to adhere to their usual inactive but settled habits, or to express their reliance on Providence by prayers and prostrations, than to interfere with such habits and such exercises, by rousing themselves to more than common activity.

In all of these ways, men mistake the true path which Providence points out to them, and act upon views of duty which are essentially defective and illusory.

For the true and safe rule of conduct, amidst all such occurrences, is that which directs us to hold ourselves in readiness for every active

duty which may be presented to us by the events of life; and to consider ourselves as offering, by such exertion, a better testimony of our loyalty to Providence than we could present by any *indolent* expressions of submission or confidence, which it is in our power to exhibit.

And, in order to perceive the force of this observation, it ought to be kept in mind, that the occasions of peculiar activity to which we are now alluding commonly *involve issues* that are to affect the subsequent course of our lives during many days or years.

It may also be noticed, that those, who have exercised the most wonderful command over the issues of events, have, in almost all instances, been men who knew how to avail themselves of such unusual combinations of circumstances.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that Providence demands our *coöperation*, in order to effect for us the good at which the arrangements of his wisdom seem to aim; or, in the more usual mode of expressing the same truth, that "Providence assists those who are best disposed to avail themselves, under his direction, of their own strength."

It is also part of the ways of God with man, that, in the ordinary course of things, many

unsuccessful attempts are commonly made by those who are aiming at important results, before they are able to hit on the measures that are ultimately to fix them in their wished-for blessings; and that it is not, usually, till we have shown a becoming disposition to exert all our own wisdom and means, that Providence reveals his own purposes by ways, which sometimes seemed not the most likely to us to have been successful, and at times to which we were least disposed to look for the fulfilment of our wishes.

Still, the rule of conduct is plain, and well established by all observation and experience of life, that our previous exertions are indispensable to the good issue which Divine Providence intends to bring forth.

In availing ourselves, however, of our own active exertions for the successful management of important combinations of circumstances, the three following conditions are implied: — First, that we must aim at such things as are *suitable to our powers*, and in accordance with our condition: — secondly, that we must pursue these things by proper measures, that is to say, by such measures as are recommended by *prudence and propriety:* — and, thirdly, that we

must be *indefatigable* and *prompt* in the employment of these measures.

There is even a grace and beauty in a magnanimous attempt to realize objects of unusual importance, though our labor should be ineffectual, provided it be not apparent that we have far overrated our powers, or pursued our purpose by ill-chosen means.

We repeat, then, that when a call to more than ordinary exertion is made to us by the events of life, — and such calls *are* occasionally occurring to all men, — the rule of conduct is, that we should be prompt and vigorous in using the activity which such occurrences demand, and should have it impressed on our minds, as a principle of the utmost importance, that we ought not to consider either a regard to our more *usual habits* of action, or a love of *indolence*, and dislike of agitating circumstances, or a mere *passive trust* in the guidance of Providence, or our preference of *abstracted devotion*, as in the slightest degree justifying us for neglecting the opportunity which has been presented to us of showing our loyalty by a more effectual and approved method.

In truth, such calls to active duty, should be considered as a summons from the Sovereign Disposer to put ourselves in "an attitude" for

filling those more trying posts by which the interests of his kingdom are to be promoted more effectually and extensively. He, therefore, who refuses to listen to such calls is preferring his own ease or low notions of duty, to the noble, though hard service to which his Master is calling him, and for the honors of which he gives him an opportunity of contending; while the man, on the contrary, who instantly throws aside all his own preconceived ideas and habits, and cheerfully advances to the post assigned him, is acting in the true spirit of a good subject of the kingdom of God, and is promoting the interests of that kingdom in the most efficient and honorable manner.

By such activity, therefore, man still supports the character of a "Living Temple," or of a faithful subject of the kingdom of God, even though his fulfilment of such duties should interfere with those more ordinary professions of veneration by which he delights to express his obedience or love. "Nor," to use the admirable illustration of a most instructive writer, "would it be more absurd for a soldier to desert his post that he may lie lurking about his General's tent, lest he should lose his reverence by losing sight of him, than for us to neglect our active duties that we may attend more closely to those of devotion."

The truth is, that the most common soldier or sailor, engaged as they are in the management of concerns, where the value of active exertions are strongly made apparent by the dangers which result from the neglect of them, and by the importance often of small instances of activity to the welfare of the whole arrangement, has, in what relates to their own profession at least, commonly far better ideas of what constitutes the true duty of man, than those entertained by persons, who, being involved in the great and variously-mixed business of the world, have frequently a less distinct view of the value of their individual exertions. It is accordingly often most pleasant and animating to observe the alacrity with which the first mentioned persons generally proceed to the discharge of their duties, and the clear perception which they have of their importance; and their example may, in this respect, be contemplated with great advantage by many who despise their scene of labor, or who fancy that their own situation and means of observation have given them far wider and juster ideas of human duty.

HOW SEASONS DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS SERVICES SHOULD BE KEPT, — AND AS PRELIMINARY TO THIS, IN WHAT SENSE IT IS TRUE THAT RELIGION SHOULD BE MINGLED WITH ALL OUR CONDUCT.

No opinion is more commonly expressed by religious men, or inculcated by the public expounders of Christianity, than that religion should be connected with every part of our conduct, should govern all our sentiments, and be the principle of all our actions.

At the same time, most men will feel that they have no very clear idea of the manner in which this union may be effected; because religion and the ordinary affairs of life seem to be two things so unlike each other, and indeed so different in their nature, that though we may place them together, we cannot, it is supposed, ever make them to amalgamate.

And, in fact, the attempt to join them is commonly productive of a style of conduct, which is in the highest degree fantastic and unnatural, and fitted to revolt the minds of judicious persons against the very supposition of the possibility or propriety of such a mixture. This incongruity may be strikingly seen in the case

of those persons who mingle the solemn duty of "singing praises to God" with their ordinary actions; and more generally in the behaviour of a vast multitude of persons who are perpetually mingling the dogmas, or vague expressions of sentiment which belong to religion, with the discharge of their commonest duties, and with all the daily occurrences of life.

Now, in order to clear up this apparent incongruity, we must keep in mind, that the word *religion*, like almost all the other words in daily use, is of a vague and abstract character, and is occasionally employed to denote the three following things: — First, those *external forms* or expressions of conduct by which religious feelings are manifested; — secondly, those *opinions* or *dogmas* into which religious apprehensions are embodied; — and, thirdly, that feeling characteristic of man, and pervading all his nature, by which he is capable of everywhere perceiving traces of a Divine mind, and of directing all his conduct with a view to the approbation of a Supreme Ruler.

If now we limit the signification of religion to the two first of these, then, in the first place, there are a great many persons at all times to be found, who, being ardently devoted to the affairs of this world, and feeling the incongruity

between these and the habitual recurrence of either the external forms of piety, or the sentimental maxims in which its feelings and opinions are embodied, rest in the belief that the two sorts of things have no relation whatever to each other; that it is absurd to attempt to unite them; and that, as worldly affairs are evidently *their* proper sphere of action, they may devote themselves wholly to these, and give themselves no concern about those loftier or more sentimental views, by which so many men seek to unite the things of time with the feelings that relate to eternity; but by their attempts to unite which they only give a fantastic and unseemly character to their whole style of conversation and action.

On the other hand, there are men whose minds, from constitutional timidity or acquired opinions and habits, are deeply imbued with a feeling of the supreme importance of religious truth; but still, confining religion to the two former of the senses of the term already mentioned, they blend its *forms* or *opinions* with all the conduct of life, and make thus a heterogeneous mixture or compound, of which all others perceive the incongruity, but are unable to produce any thing like a complete union or identification of the subjects.

In both cases the difficulty arises from limited and erroneous views of what we are to understand by religion, and from an attempt to reconcile it, under some of its aspects, with affairs to which it has only an affinity when taken in its entire and more comprehensive character.

If, accordingly, we take the term religion in this more general acceptation, as denoting the *feeling characteristic of man*, by which he is enabled to perceive a designing mind in all the events of nature, and to refer all his conduct to the approbation of a Supreme Ruler, then there is not only no difficulty or incongruity in the attempt to unite religion with our most ordinary transactions and feelings, nor do we form by their union, as in the former case, a merely heterogeneous mixture, but the two things become finely and fully incorporated, and there is produced a union or identification by which the characters of both are rendered more excellent and available. The affairs of life, on the one hand, are elevated into a higher and a purer character, and, on the other, Religion descends from her throne of clouds and darkness, and becomes the ruler of all that is fine in feeling, or beautiful in conduct, or magnificent in expectation.

Indeed the *whole* aspect of Nature and of life undergoes a most blessed change when this union has been effected; the wide face of Nature assumes the aspect of a glorious scene on which the beneficent government of God is apparent, all the rational beings that people this world appear under the character of subjects of one grand empire which the Creator is exercising over all worlds, and the most common actions and feelings of life assume a lofty and fine expression as parts of the duty given to us by our Supreme Lord, and by the due regulation and management of which we evince our loyalty to his service. A finer and richer coloring is thus thrown over the whole aspect of creation, and things, that before were disunited as of entirely incongruous kinds, become incorporated into one grand and mutually pervading union.

Correct notions respecting the possibility of this union, and the means of effecting it, are by far the greatest improvement that can take place in the religious apprehensions of any individual, or that could be given to the general sentiments of mankind.

And the actual union, in the case of any individual, forms by far the happiest and most desirable state of the human mind. In fact, it

is only when this union has been effected, that man acts with the entire powers of his nature, and exhibits his characteristic feelings in their purest and happiest state.

It is accordingly, as the reader must have perceived, the primary purpose of this treatise to aid in the dissemination of notions calculated to produce this change in the religious apprehensions of men, and, in so far as opinions are capable of influencing conduct, to lead to the desired union itself.

HOW FAR OUGHT THE MORE DIRECT EXPRESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS FEELING TO BE MINGLED WITH OUR ORDINARY CONDUCT.

In what we have said under the preceding section, we have considered religion or religious feelings as completely identified with our modes of thought and action in daily life, giving to them a new and higher character, and thus constituting, along with these ordinary actions, not *two things* placed side by side, but one fine and harmonious union, beautifying and ennobling the whole aspect of life, and springing up

with freshness and freedom along with every movement of the heart and action of the conduct.

But, besides this most desirable union, it is also proper that *more direct* expressions of religious feeling should be mingled with our most common actions; that thus the religious, the preëminently religious, nature of man may be more distinctly acknowledged, and expressed by forms suited to it more exclusively.

Thus, the morning and evening prayer for assistance and protection ought not to be neglected by any person; a devout acknowledgment, before partaking of the bounty of Providence in our ordinary meals is also a direct expression of religious feeling, of which men in all times and countries have recognised the propriety; and, during the course of the day, occurrences will occasionally be intervening, which a well-disposed mind will gladly seize as most suitable to such an exercise of its characteristic and sublimest powers. There are thus interesting changes in the life of every man, which more deeply affect all his powers of feeling, and make him sensible, however high may be his station among his fellow-men, how much depends on the course which he takes, and what need he has of Divine assistance and protection,

that he may fully realize the magnificent though mysterious promises of his spiritual nature. All such occurrences are most suitable for direct expressions of religious submission, or thankfulness, or trust.

In some countries and ages, religious services of the kind now alluded to have been more common than in others; and the southern nations of Europe, as well as the nations of heathen antiquity, seem to have mingled religion with more propriety and effect, with their ordinary avocations, than the more northern nations.

This, probably, has originated, to a great extent, at least, in the forms of their worship, which are more favorable for such mixture with the transactions of the day; for the fact is, that, in order to give any people an inducement and inclination thus to avail themselves of the direct forms of piety, these forms must be fitted for readily incorporating themselves with all the ordinary feelings and avocations of life; and the *imagination* and *heart* must have much to do with forms that are fitted for this fine and salutary alliance. This, accordingly, was the character of the finely mythological religions of ancient times; and this same character has been retained, along with many of the actual

forms of heathen ages, in the religious rites that are characteristic of the nations of the more southern and luxuriant regions of Europe.

In our own country, and in some of the contiguous nations, religion has been divested of almost all this imaginative and symbolical character; and, being reduced to a mere system of abstract doctrines and theories, has little tendency to ally itself with daily occurrences, or to be readily incorporated with the ordinary movements of the fancy or heart.

There can be no question, at the same time, that much superstition also is mingled with the symbolical ritual of southern nations; and, perhaps, every religion, which is chiefly characterized by this symbolical character, has a tendency to degenerate into superstition.

But the best form of worship, either for public adoption or for private use, would be that which should at once exclude all superstitious practices, and so apply itself to the senses, and heart, and imagination of man, as, by means of these, to be easily incorporated with daily feelings and occurrences, and to give a finer and more spiritual character to these than they naturally, without such aid, are apt to assume.

It is pleasing, in those countries where the Papal religion still reigns, to see at all times

the most magnificent of its temples open to the passer-by, where, amidst objects and associations fitted to impress his imagination and heart, he may pour out those devout feelings, which, in all well-disposed minds, will be occasionally excited, even amidst the bustle and the temptations of the world. It is pleasing even to see the symbols of religious worship occurring, in such countries, by the way-side; and the chapel and the crucifix recalling to the mind of the "wayfaring man" those sentiments of piety and trust, which, when left to its natural aspirations, the heart of man so readily and keenly embraces.

Our feelings of satisfaction are, no doubt, lessened by witnessing the degrading superstitions which are associated with such acts of homage; but a feeling of regret must also be awakened, that, in our own country, and with purer notions of religious truth, so few opportunities are afforded to men of expressing their devout feelings, and so few incitements to the indulgence of such sentiments.

But, when the religious forms of any country are not favorable to the indulgence of such exercises, a good man ought to make opportunities of indulging them for himself; and the direct services of piety might thus, with much

advantage, be mingled far more frequently than they are with our most common avocations, or, at least, might blend their influence most happily with the occurrence of those more touching events which life is occasionally presenting to every human being.

HOW THE SABBATH-DAY OUGHT TO BE SPENT.

However far men may be disposed to separate the common business of life from that pure and high feeling which ought to pervade and dignify all such occupations, and however neglectful they may be of the direct services of piety during the progress of ordinary events, it is yet instructive and pleasing to remark, that the religious nature of man has been so felt in all countries and times, that no people or nation has wanted days expressly appropriated to Divine services, and sanctified by a spirit of piety and holiness.

Even heathen nations had such days; and these were plentifully intermingled with the ordinary course of events, and had, in many respects, a good effect upon the character and

feelings of those who availed themselves of them.

But the Christian Sabbath is, of all the institutions that have been established with this view, by far the finest and most valuable in many respects; the most pervaded by grand and affecting associations; the most happily characterized by the reasonable nature of the service which it prescribes, and the exercises to which it invites; the most useful to all orders of living creatures, and the best fitted, when duly improved, for diffusing many beneficial influences over the whole aspect of life, and over the condition of all the varied ranks into which society is divided.

Yet there are two great misapplications of the nature and purpose of this day, of which men are apt to be guilty; and with respect to which it is consistent with the purpose of this treatise that some observations should be made.

In the first place, there are men, who, without denying the excellence of the Sabbath, are yet so immersed in the business of life, that they cannot divest themselves of its cares and pursuits even during this holy day; they have acquired habits, during the busier portions of their lives, which attend them even during those seasons which should be set apart for

devotional duties; and, with the usual perversity of mankind, when their affections or habits are strong, they fancy that they can perceive many reasons sufficient to exempt *them* from those duties of piety, for the performance of which they yet believe this institution to be generally valuable.

It is deeply to be regretted, that in every Christian country, — and among those orders of society which are in other respects most exemplary and respectable, — a great multitude of men are to be found, who are guilty of this error, and who, not unfrequently, live in a perpetual struggle between their impressions of duty regarding this day, and the force which their habits of business have acquired for drawing them aside from duty. They commonly, however, seek peace to their minds by some appearances of reasoning; and the three following grounds of excuse are usually resorted to by them, as apologies for their conduct.

In the first place, they insist that there are duties, or affairs of ordinary life, so important, that even religion justifies the neglect of the services of piety, when such pressing affairs are to be discharged; and they naturally apply this reasoning with full force to *their own* circumstances, and maintain, that the business

they have to transact is exactly of this urgent and indispensable kind.

In the second place, they maintain, that religious services are of no use or importance, but in so far as they have a tendency to lead to a correct and faithful performance of the common duties of life; and, as *they* are busied in such duties, they think they cannot be considered as guilty of any great impropriety, if, in neglecting the mean, they are wholly given to the attainment of the end, for which only, according to their theory, the mean is valuable.

And, as a natural consequence of these suggestions, they hold, in the last place, that the Sabbath was primarily and chiefly intended for the use of the great multitude of mankind; of those portions of society, whose opportunities of knowing their duty, or wishes to perform it, are of a very slender kind, and easy to be perverted or overlooked; while they themselves are entitled to maintain, that they have both just apprehensions of what they ought to do, and feel every desire to do their part in the business of life with assiduity and good faith. The Sabbath, then, though valuable to the "man-servant or the maid-servant," has small claims, they venture to believe, on those whose minds are enlightened by science, or who are

busied in the great and liberalizing transactions of public life.

Now, with respect to the first of these reasons, we admit that there *are* duties of so pressing a nature, that Religion herself justifies the omission of her services, when these duties demand to be fulfilled; but we maintain, at the same time, that such duties are not of *frequent* occurrence in the course of affairs, and that, if the neglect of which we complain were confined to the times when such events have actually occurred, there would be no appearance of a want of duty in the conduct of men, nor any ground for insisting that the sanctity of the Sabbath had sustained a violation. If only the man who has such *indispensable* duties to fulfil needed to be justified, and all but those who had affairs to manage which could not be postponed were faithful to their obligations, we should have reason to rejoice, that this great appointment of Divine wisdom and love was met by the united gratitude and veneration of the whole multitude of mankind.

And with respect to the second objection, it proceeds on the supposition that religious services are *only* valuable in so far as they have a tendency to lead to a faithful discharge of ordinary duties. The reader must be aware, that

in that portion of this Work,* in which we treated fully of Divine services, we have endeavoured to put these duties in a different and higher light. They are, as we there showed, *direct* expressions of our religious nature, or sentiments and feelings, of those parts of our nature which give to us our preëminent and characteristic place in life, and by which we are allied with a world more august and spiritual than that in which we act, and are enabled to put ourselves into the highest of all attitudes, that of "communion" with the great Source of all good. That religious duties derive *all* their excellence and obligation from their influence on other and more common duties, is by no means a full or just statement of their nature; and it is from a misapprehension of this kind that so many respectable men fail to per-

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* Reference is here made to Part Second of the "Living Temple," (Vol. II. pp. 7–94.) It is too long to be quoted, but is an extremely interesting and valuable part of the Work. It inculcates and proceeds upon the great truth, that man is essentially and characteristically a *Religious Being*, and that, *as such*, "it is proper and becoming that he should perform some services *directly expressive* of these religious feelings, and of the connexion in which they place him with the Supreme Sovereign of Nature."

ceive the truly grand nature of such services, or willingly become the slaves of inferior pursuits, while they have an opportunity afforded them by Divine Providence itself, and associated with all touching and noble recollections, of recognising the higher and holier nature which they bear, and of availing themselves of the preëminent *privilege* to which its services summon them. In one word, the man, who neglects his religious duties for the common affairs of life, is sinking by far the grandest part of his nature in his love for pursuits that ally him only with an inferior order of events; and while his head is surrounded by "a diadem," is consenting to become a slave.

And if this be the true account of our religious duties, then it is futile to insist that the most solemn services of piety, or her most beautiful institutions, were intended only for the lower orders of men; for the highest intellect has still to acknowledge, that it is its capacity of feeling its relation to God that constitutes by far its proudest honor, and that any neglect of this, or of the services which it enjoins, is treason against our noblest privilege, and a disdain of our truest happiness.

It would, then, be of great use for all such men to impress deeply on their minds the fol-

lowing plain principles, which result from what has now been stated.

In the first place, that they have been in a mistake in supposing that religious services are of *no* use or excellence but for their influence on the performance of common duties; for these services are expressions of the highest and most glorious portion of our common nature.

In the second place, that they have not seen such services in their true nature when they regarded them simply as *duties*, — for they are, in truth, the highest *privileges* and *honors* which man enjoys; and are not less honorable to the most exalted intellect, than to minds of the humblest attainments.

In the third place, that no men need the refining influence of such services more than themselves; for business and the ordinary affairs of life are evidently engrossing their thoughts, and they ought to be thankful that Providence has put it in their power, amidst so many causes of degradation, still to revert to their highest feelings, and to secure for their nature that cultivation which religious services are so well fitted to afford to all men, — but more especially to those whose hearts and imaginations, during their more common days, are so apt to

be entirely occupied with the low and vexatious cares of this transitory life.

In the fourth place, that the more eminent their place in society, and the more extensive their influence, the greater are their obligations to set an example of all fidelity in the keeping of this holy day to those whose minds and conduct must be much influenced by the example of their superiors.

And, in the last place, that, by neglecting the Sabbath, and its holy and purifying influences, they are denying themselves some of the *purest satisfactions* that belong to human nature, are depriving themselves of many advantages for the dignified and becoming discharge of ordinary duties, and are laying up for themselves regrets which every good man would avoid, when life shall be to them but a subject of review, and when their happiness or misery will depend on their consciousness of the manner in which they have fulfilled all its requisitions.

We have judged it proper to state these considerations more particularly, because the evil they are meant to correct is one which unquestionably prevails among persons engaged in the business of life to a melancholy extent, and because we are satisfied that many of these

are persons of such respectable characters, and, in other respects, of so just a sense of duty, that they would instantly and eagerly adopt a different course of conduct, if the views which have now been stated, and which run through the other parts of this Work, were made familiar to them.

We have now, however, to address a word or two to men of a different character.

If there are many men who, from false views of the nature of religious services, think themselves justified in neglecting them, or at least the seasons more expressly consecrated to their fulfilment, that they may devote themselves to those secular interests, from their influence on which they suppose such services to be alone important, there are other men, whose minds, from constitutional tendencies or early and long-continued impressions, are so sensitively alive to the supreme importance of pious services, that they can permit no recreation, however innocent in itself, to mingle with the days devoted to piety; their Sabbaths accordingly become, from an overstrained indulgence in devotional duties, seasons of gloom and of

any thing but cheerful enjoyment; and other men, who witness their austerity, are deterred from imitating their fidelity, lest they, too, should be led into the same extravagance of devotion.

Now, all such persons should be made to understand, that the devotional feeling is of such a kind, that it cannot be maintained for any length of time in a state of intensity, and that any attempt to prolong such services, throughout all the hours of a day, is founded on mistaken notions of the capabilities of human nature, of the character of the religious feeling, and of the duty required by the institution of holy days.

It is of importance also to press on the consideration of such persons, that no piety can be genuine in its kind, or acceptable to God, which is not *cheerful* and improving to all the kindly feelings of our nature; that God "delights in mercy rather than sacrifice;" and that nothing is more explicit in the discourses of the Founder of Christianity, than his declarations, that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath;" and that in every thing "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day."

It ought farther to be stated to such persons, that there are many exercises which, though not *strictly* devotional, are yet in most beautiful harmony with that state of mind which enlightened devotion inspires; and by which exercises the hours of the Sabbath may be employed, not only so as to maintain all its sanctity, but to render it an occasion of the most delightful and improving satisfactions. Every thing that binds us more strongly to our fellow-creatures, that strengthens our natural love of our relations, that enables us to do good to the distressed, the ignorant, or the young, or generally to promote the growth of "good-will to men," is of the kind here alluded to; and, to a mind that relishes such delights, the hours of the Sabbath will not be too long for a full participation of them.

In the last place, it may be stated generally, that he best fulfils the purpose of the Sabbath, who, while he devotes a suitable portion of that day to the public and private services of devotion, can yet so employ the remaining portion of his time, as to intermingle with these devotional duties such relaxations as, without partaking of the nature of ordinary business, have the best tendency to awaken in the mind all those soft and grateful emotions which bind

man more strongly and willingly, both to the Giver of all good, and to the interests of those with whom he is connected in life.

These are exercises which will render the Sabbath a day not of gloom, but of pure enjoyment; and the best mode of giving it this character may be left to the good sense and enlightened feelings of each individual. It is sufficient for us to have described the manner in which the "day of rest" may be spent not only devoutly, but with true and animated cheerfulness.

SEASONS OF MORE THAN ORDINARY SOLEMNITY, THAT IS, SEASONS DEVOTED TO THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE LEADING FACTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

It is justly insisted on by pious men, that the *peculiarities* of the Christian doctrine ought to form the principal subjects of meditation with men at all times, or ought to be incorporated with all their habits of thinking and of feeling.

And it is interesting to remark, that these peculiarities, as they are presented by Chris-

tianity in its original form, are set before us in a shape which of all others best adapts them to become subjects of our daily contemplation.

For, in the first place, it is simply as *facts* that they are there presented to us, not as doctrines which derive their complexion from the varying tastes and understandings of men; and which can never, even when best founded, have the same direct application to life and conduct, which is possessed by facts.

It is farther to be remarked, that these facts formed the leading features of *a life*, not different from that of mankind in general, but rather bearing the most interesting features of our common life more deeply and instructively stamped on it; it was a life spent amidst humble circumstances, in labor and privation, amidst opposition from man, and during long years of protracted expectation, only deepening in its horrors, as years rolled over it, terminated apparently amidst great disaster, procured by adherence even to a righteous cause, yet finally raised from this apparent ruin, and advanced to unparalleled "glory and honor" in the kingdom of God.

These facts are thus connected with the most touching recollections and hopes that can occupy the heart and imagination of man;

they awaken thoughts of the wonderful circumstances amidst which the struggle of life is ordered for all the children of men; of that Divine pity which has looked in mercy on the sinful and suffering condition in which human nature is placed; of the duty of steadfast adherence to conscience, even though death itself should seem to be the inevitable consequence of our steadfastness, and of the wonderful things which are in store for those who fail not in their obedience.

Now, all of these considerations show us how finely the *peculiarities* of the Christian faith are fitted to be the daily subjects of our meditations; and with what a direct power they apply themselves to all the most interesting thoughts that can be awakened in the heart and imagination of man during his progress through this "vale of tears."

These peculiarities, also, which are thus adapted to be the subjects of our daily meditation, ought, consequently, to be so employed, in all public ministrations, even on ordinary Sabbaths, as to color and give interest to all the other views of duty which it may be the business of the preacher to present; and it is not without reason that there is a prejudice in the minds of the generality of Christians

against any exhibitions of duty which leave topics of such interest altogether untouched.

Indeed, from the earliest ages of the existence of Christianity, these grand facts of the history of its Founder were incorporated with the usual services of all the churches; and the ritual of all countries that had embraced the faith of Christ was arranged with reference to these facts. The whole year was thus a continued commemoration of the leading events of our Saviour's life; and his birth, his baptism, his temptation, his transfiguration, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and all the other intervening facts of his history, were celebrated in services, often excellently adapted to give these events a deep and lasting hold of the imaginations and hearts of Christians.

It cannot but be a matter of regret, that in some of the most enlightened churches of modern times this fine arrangement of the public services of the sanctuary has been neglected; and that the minds of Christians are more occupied with *dogmas* derived from the *peculiar philosophical views* which interested the thoughts of the founders of these churches, and which are, in most instances, by no means of the most just or luminous kind, than purified by the remembrance of those transcendently-beautiful and

instructive facts which formed the leading events in the life of Christ.

But however this may be, there never has been a church which did not so far feel the preëminent solemnity of some of these facts as to have services set apart for the direct commemoration of them; and especially the central and leading fact of this most wonderful history, that is to say, "the death of Christ," has at all times been commemorated according to the positive commandment of our Lord, by the most holy service which the Christian community can celebrate.

It is important also to remark, that the thoughts which this fact is fitted to awaken are not such as terminate in the fact itself; for that fact was but the central event of an economy which embraces the previous dispensations of Divine Providence from the beginning of the world, and which has continued, ever since Christ died, to extend blessings consequent on his coming to all succeeding generations; so that, in celebrating that event, we are naturally led to thoughts respecting the wonderful dealings of God with men in all ages preceding the coming of the Saviour, to thoughts also relating to the infinite mercy and compassion displayed in the Divine dispensa-

tions towards a race of beings who bear habitually about with them the consciousness of sin, and to thoughts respecting the great things which are yet to be the portion of our race during the future revolutions of the great kingdom of God. It is much to be regretted that these grand peculiarities of the Christian faith are not thus presented to us *simply as facts* leading to such recollections and such hopes, rather than under the form of doctrines shaped by the fancy of men, and deriving their complexion from the limited views of the times when they were first formed; because, though it is impossible to reconcile the minds of any number of thinking men to precisely the same view of any merely technical doctrine, there is no well-disposed mind that would not instantly admit the singular beauty and grandeur of *the facts* which compose the life of the Founder of our faith, and the supreme interest of those recollections and hopes which these facts are fitted to awaken in every human heart.

Indeed, so general is the impression of the grandeur and interest of these facts, and of the meditations which they involve, that there are in all Christian countries many persons of all ranks, who, though neglectful of the more common services of the sanctuary, yet feel all

their reverence and devotion awakened when the more solemn seasons of communion return, and who would shudder at the idea of being thought incapable of appreciating the "awful beauty" of that divine interposition by which "the word was made flesh;"* or of feeling the many touching thoughts which are necessarily associated with the remembrance of this event.

There are other men, however, whose minds are differently affected, and who, though they support the authority of the established forms of worship on ordinary Sabbaths, are yet afraid so to pledge themselves to the more peculiar tenets of their faith, as to partake of the most holy and solemn of its institutions.

In general it may be stated, that when this feeling arises from views which have been embraced by the *understandings* of those who so act, it is chiefly to be ascribed to the perverted aspect which their conceptions of Christian doctrine have assumed from the erroneous

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* In the original it stands,—"God was made man and dwelt among us." As, according to the whole tenor of the author's remarks, he considers the Communion Service as commemorative of a *fact* and not of a doctrine, it is supposed he would not object to the substitution of the *Scriptural* expression of the text in the place of his own.

mode in which their education has been conducted, from their associating with the peculiarities of Christianity dogmas which have their origin exclusively in the caprice and limited views of men; and there is perhaps no man of a sound mind who would not instantly admit the beauty and interest of all the peculiarities of our faith, if these were presented to him in their native form, who would not feel his obligation to perform all the services which are supposed to be connected with the commemoration of these peculiarities.

What enlightened or well-disposed man doubts that the ways of Divine Providence have been of a very wonderful and gracious kind towards the human race in all the ages of their existence, who does not admit, that the consciousness of guilt is the greatest of all the burdens by which the heart of man is oppressed, and that the good news of Divine forgiveness is consequently the most blessed that ever was published on earth, who refuses to acknowledge that the most solemn of all the duties, which man has to fulfil, is that of devoting himself to the service of his Creator, by a life of purity and charity, or who does not feel that his greatest source of thankfulness is that of being permitted to anticipate for himself some

glorious fate, during the wonderful changes which the progressive kingdom of God is yet to undergo?

These, however, are precisely the views which the peculiar facts of the Christian faith were meant to substantiate; and he, who is willing to offer unto God thanksgiving for these recollections and hopes, is, in fact, willing to do every thing for the celebration of which the most solemn festivals of the Christian church have been instituted.

It would be well if men of liberal or philosophical views would take this mode of considering the meaning of the services prescribed by the solemnities of our faith; for there is assuredly no well-disposed man, who, with such views of the meaning of these services, would not consider them as the most becoming and interesting in which human nature can be employed.

All Christian men, accordingly, will be disposed to keep holy, with every preparation of the heart and life, those solemn seasons, when the great peculiarities of their faith are commemorated; the season devoted to such services will be considered by them as among the happiest and most delightful which they meet with; and the experience of all past ages

justifies us in saying, that those who so keep these holy seasons will be disposed to speak of the satisfaction received from them, and of the benefits to their spiritual and moral nature which they have occasioned, with the most grateful and fervent remembrance.

In fact, the virtues cherished or called into exercise by these seasons lie at the foundation of all the characteristics of the Christian life; for he is not a Christian in the highest and holiest sense of the term, who is not animated by a profound admiration of the gracious purposes and dispensations of Divine Providence towards the human race, who is not disposed to view the Founder of his faith, in that truly august light in which he is represented as also the Author of salvation to all who believe in him, as the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Mediator between God and man, and who does not habitually exercise that trust, and gratitude, and love which are due to a Being who holds so important a place in the plans of Providence, and who has been the source to this world of such unspeakable blessings.

Now, these are precisely the graces which are chiefly called into exercise by such seasons of public solemnity, dedicated as such seasons are to the remembrance of the great facts of the history and life of Christ; and it is hence that it is so momentous to the nourishment of the Christian life in the hearts of men, that these seasons should be met by careful preparation, and observed with solemn reverence.

DAYS SET APART BY PRIVATE CHRISTIANS FOR A REVIEW OF LIFE.

We have no word in our language which expresses directly the peculiar character or purpose of such days, or seasons. In another of the languages of modern Europe they are designated by the very expressive title of "thoughtful days," or days of thought, (denk-tage), and this name will sufficiently point out the particular kind of days to which we are at present alluding.

In all ages the eminently wise and good have been in the habit of keeping such days; and

it is scarcely possible to conceive any thoughtful man, who does not feel a desire occcasionally to seize such seasons for a review of the wonderful events which have characterized his life.

Indeed, the keeping sacred of such seasons has an obvious foundation in the circumstances in which man is placed, and in the solemnity of the recollections which the progress of events is constantly awakening in the minds of all who pass through life with becoming consideration.

For, in the first place, who has not been guilty of many violations of duty during the past portions of his life, and who, accordingly, is not disposed to look back on his history with a melancholy feeling of the weakness of all human resolutions, and the instability of all human virtue? The first kind of such seasons of remembrance may accordingly be stated to be those which are set apart for a review of the *errors* of life; and it is good for man thus occasionally to bring his faults and failures before the view of his mind, for there are many *virtues* most suitable to the condition of man, and of great moment to the well-being of his nature, which such a review of his failings is fitted to cherish.

Sorrow for his offences, humility, or a becoming sense of his own weak and dependent condition, thankfulness for Divine forbearance, trust in Divine mercy, and a just apprehension of the wonderful provisions which Divine wisdom and love have made for the salvation of man, are the virtues awakened by such a review of our sins, and these are all of them virtues most suited to the condition of man, and the sources to him of many excellencies of conduct.

Indeed, it is the peculiar effect of such a review of our sins, that they bring strongly home to our minds this most interesting and beautiful consideration, that we live in a "kingdom of grace," or of forgiveness, in a portion of the Divine dominions over which the "tender mercy" of God is especially visible, and where our best-founded hopes must rest on the provisions made by Divine love and pity for our redemption, considered under the peculiar character of beings who have "offended," but to whom he is willing to extend "pardon."

Hence, the style of feeling that is most suited to man is that which *mingles* penitence with trust; it is the feeling of beings who are conscious that they have "sinned," but who also are called to rejoice that "pardon" is offered to all who have offended.

The true *happiness* of life, as enjoyed by man, is said to be "the joy of grief;" and the appropriate nature of the *virtue* of man is also of an analogous kind; it is humility tempered by trust, or penitence relieved and ennobled by the hope of forgiveness.

This is a view of the condition of man which is full of the deepest interest; it is hence that we see the propriety of humility, and penitence, and trust, and tender apprehensions of Divine mercy, as graces of the heart and life of man; and it is hence also that we learn to view him under his peculiarly interesting relation of a subject of "the kingdom of grace," — a subject of that department of the Divine dominions, in which pardon is offered to beings who feel that they have sinned, but who are yet invited to rejoice that "peace and good-will have been proclaimed on earth." We shall have occasion again to advert to this very interesting topic.

It is sufficient at present to have noticed, that days appropriated to a review of the failings of our lives have a peculiar fitness for awakening and cherishing the virtues suited to a being who is so situated, and who must derive from these virtues the most appropriate ornaments of his condition.

But, in the second place, our days of review may also be set apart for *thankfulness* on account of blessings we have received. There is, in fact, no man, however sad may have been his lot in other respects, who has not some remembrances of "peculiar favor" manifested towards him by the kindness of Providence; and it is becoming and good in all men, therefore, to consecrate some seasons for the review and remembrance of such benefits.

The virtue or grace chiefly awakened by such remembrances will, consequently, be gratitude; but yet, even while indulging this grace, the true nature of the condition of man as a subject of "the kingdom of grace" will become apparent; and the sincerest thanksgivings will but make us more sensible how unworthy we have been of the kindness manifested towards us, or how deeply we have offended by our sins against the goodness we have so richly experienced. Indeed, perhaps the human heart is never more disposed to feel its own unworthiness, that is, to become sensible of its sins, than at the very time when it is melted by the experience of the peculiar loving-kindness and providential bounty of God; and thus the *mixed nature* of the feelings that are properly constituent of human virtue is again made apparent.

Our thanksgivings for mercies received will, indeed, often be for deliverances from the very effects or tendencies of our sins; and thus it cannot but happen, that our very review of our deliverances must quicken our feeling of the inherent sinfulness, and weakness of our nature.

It is good for man thus to mingle "trembling with his mirth;" and as sorrow for sin is not genuine except when it leads to thankfulness for Divine promises of mercy, so neither, on the other hand, is gratitude for benefits received of the most excellent sort, except when it is accompanied and characterized by a deeper sense of the frailties which have made us unworthy of such goodness.

In the third place, our days of thought, or of solemn consideration of our state, may be either on account of *important changes* in our condition which have already taken place, or which we anticipate as about to occur.

Sometimes it is for affecting changes that have already happened; as when we are disposed to look back to the departure of those whom we loved, and whose loss has materially affected our happiness or state in life. Reviews of such interesting occurrences are attended with very good effects, for they remind us of

the *transitory state* in which we are placed; and all our impressions of the objects and scenes around us become characterized by greater tenderness, when we thus "mourn for the dead whom we loved," and feel how soon others will look back to our departure with kindred emotions. This sense of the "transitory nature" of our present blessings and condition, is also in fine harmony with our general state as subjects of "the kingdom of grace;" and the feeling of sin seems to be indissolubly connected with all our contemplations of the ruin which death has made on the face of our world.

Perhaps, however, our season of thoughtfulness may have a reference to changes which we contemplate as yet to occur in our own state; as when we are about to enter on any new course of life, or to form any connexion that promises to affect materially our future well-being.

It is good and becoming in man to look thoughtfully towards such changes in his journey, and devoutly to implore the favor of that Providence whose "eye never slumbers nor sleeps," but watches with incessant care over all the paths in which the journey of life is performed. Such devout imploring of Di-

vine protection, however, will also bring to the suppliant a feeling of his own unworthiness of the mercy he is seeking to obtain, or an impression of his liability to act unsuitably to the grace he is anxious to obtain. Yet this feeling of unworthiness will be relieved, if it is of the true kind, by the recollection that goodness and mercy are characteristic of all the courses of Divine Providence, that good is made to come even from evil, and that whatever sorrows may yet await us in life, our best refuge, amidst all distresses, must ever be that Divine goodness which afflicts us only in "loving-kindness."

Here also accordingly we see the mixed but interesting nature of the graces that are suitable to man; and hence we learn the value of such seasons of thankfulness for the cultivation of these graces, and for the best and happiest state of the human soul.

Indeed it is a pity that such seasons are not more generally embraced by men for the consideration of the events of their lives; for nothing is so wonderful as our own individual histories, when we take an enlarged and thoughtful review of the series of events that have entered into them; and in stating, therefore, the rules of a good life, it is impossible not to recommend this frequent "consideration

of our ways," as among the most excellent methods of enabling us to follow out, in its true direction, the path in which Divine Providence intended us to walk, and of thus securing to us all the happiness which is compatible with the mixed and suffering state in which we are placed.

SOCIAL RELATIONS OF LIFE.

We have now gone over all the varieties of a day, and have endeavoured to show in what manner these may be spent so as to enable man, amidst all changes, to sustain the character of a Living Temple. We have not, however, particularly noticed, that, during all the engagements into which these varieties of his day may summon him, man still acts in the view of his fellow-men, and with relation to their feelings and conduct. This view of his condition, moreover, is one which cannot be overlooked in the delineation of a good life; for there is no other circumstance of his lot that gives occasion to a greater variety of duties, while, at the same time, those relations in which he stands to others are so distinct and interesting, as to afford an opportunity for a display of his obligations, of which all minds may feel the application.

This, then, leads us to the grand duty of Christian charity in all its branches; for love to man is the principle which the Divine Teacher has chiefly endeavoured to inculcate, and under which he considers all the other parts of human duty, in so far at least as the connexion of men with each other is concerned, as capable of being arranged. "Love," says the Apostle, "worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

And it is with deep insight into the nature and relations of men, that this truly divine principle has been raised to this preëminent rank; for the connexion of men with each other, as inhabitants of the same world, and governed by the same hopes and fears, the same laws, and the same interests, is of the most touching and instructive kind when properly viewed; and there can be no question, that what is chiefly wanted for the perfection of our condition, considered as beings who have to act along with others in a great variety of most interesting relations, is the universal prevalence of that kindliness and good-will to man, which it is the great object of the Author of Christianity to inculcate, and by the preëminence of which, in his doctrine, his system of duty is peculiarly dis-

tinguished from that of all the other institutions that have aimed at the improvement of the human race.

There are then, fortunately, certain relations in which men stand to each other, some more and others less comprehensive, which are pointed out by Nature herself, and which offer themselves to our view on the most superficial consideration of the place which man holds in life. We cannot, then, do better, with the view of illustrating this subject, than avail ourselves of these distinctions as pointed out to us by Nature; and the adoption of this mode of examination will at once maintain the living unity of our subject, and save us from that minuteness and particularity of detail which has so commonly prevailed in similar treatises, but which have rather seemed to take all interest from the subject, than to place it in that intelligible and pleasing form in which it is desirable that it should be exhibited.

These relations are the following: — First, that of man as the member of a domestic circle or family, which is the fundamental relation of human life; — secondly, as a friend or intimate of some other individuals whom he has chosen as his particular associates; — thirdly, as a member of a neighbourhood; — fourthly, as a

being surrounded by others who are exposed to suffering and distress of many various kinds; — fifthly, as a person exposed to the enmity of others; — next, as a member of a public community; — and, lastly, as one of the universal family of the human race.

There is obviously nothing forced in the selection of these topics, for they are derived from distributions made by Nature herself; and the rules which they suggest are such as can be made available by every man in the ordinary intercourse of life.

FIRST, THE FAMILY RELATION.

It will at once occur, as the great principle applicable to this view of our condition, that the man who conducts himself in the manner most suited to his situation, is the person who has all the natural feelings of his heart in the *kindliest* and most *vigorous operation*, and who manifests their existence in the most pleasing and effective manner.

It is, in short, love, natural and human love in its purest and most fundamental form, that is here chiefly wanted; and thus the value of

the great principle of Christian charity presents itself to our notice on the very first aspect of the social condition of man, and as the chief requisite for the perfection of that relation which is destined to prepare him for all the others in which, with respect to his fellow-men, he can be placed.

And Nature herself has signified the value which she has attached to the cultivation of this principle, in the daily intercourse of domestic life, by having made the feelings which bind parents and children, brothers and sisters, relations of every degree, and all indeed who dwell with us in the same house, and who participate in our most private interests, the most vigorous, and tender, and pleasant to be indulged, and, it may be added, the last to be eradicated from the human heart, of all those which form the supremely beautiful mechanism of the human constitution.

There are, indeed, other passions in the human heart which occasionally seize it with more overwhelming force ; but there are none whose existence is so incorporated with the very elements of our being, which maintain their influence with so steady and permanent a duration, or which are so apt to return with deep interest, when all other passions and inter-

ests have faded, and to make the last hours and moments of life a heart-trying retrospect of the scenes which first opened on us in "the morning of our days," or a renewal of those affections, which first bound us to the society of our kindred.

It deserves, accordingly, to be particularly remarked, that so efficacious have these fundamental arrangements of Nature actually become, that there are few disquietudes of life that may not be effaced from the mind of the man who can at any time find "a quiet resting-place" amidst the kindly affections of his own home; and, on the other hand, that the utmost prosperity of life is of small avail to him who has no pleasure in the society of his kindred, but who finds in the bosom of his family a constant source of irritation and dissatisfaction, or who has but an *imperfect* relish of the pure happiness which the enjoyment of domestic felicity is fitted to give to better-constituted hearts.

We may then, upon this view of the arrangements of Nature, and of the place which she has given to our household affections, adopt the following conclusions: —

In the first place, that these are of more importance to the real soundness of the human

heart, and to the enjoyment of all its truest and most pervading pleasures, than any other feelings which have a relation to wider but less touching arrangements, that they are the very principles of health and freshness to our moral nature, and that there must be an essential and incurable want in any mind that is insensible to their power.

And hence it follows, in the second place, that the man, who neglects the cultivation of these primary affections for any thing else in life, is sacrificing that enjoyment which is fundamental, and the very life-blood of his heart, for gratifications which in themselves can never be so endearing, and which, indeed, should always have a reference to the enjoyment of these primary and fundamental affections.

It follows, from the same general view, in the third place, that he who is prevented, by any fatality in his lot, from the liberal and free indulgence of such feelings, is in fact a greater sufferer, and in a more important point, than the man who, amidst many privations, of which the former knows nothing, has yet his kindly and household affections in full operation, with every mean of gratifying them. Indeed Providence, in the wonderful eqaulity of its arrange-

ments, thus often compensates to the poor, by the purity and warmth of their domestic joys, for their want of the more external enjoyments which she sometimes lavishes on those whom she at the same time dooms to partake of them with a solitary and unparticipated relish.

And in the last place, it follows, that any heart that is insensible, from natural constitution or depraved habits, to these household endearments, wants the best elements of true moral goodness, as well as the sweetest springs of human satisfaction.

Every man therefore, who is desirous of giving to his life its most perfect form, and of reaping from his mode of conducting it the truest and fullest measure of enjoyment, will make it his first study to be kind and obliging to all who live with him in the same house. If the more endearing relations of husband and wife, or parent and child, do not characterize his home, there are, at least, *some* individuals to whom he is more closely bound, and who supply to him the place of these more genial affections; and a well-constituted mind may derive from the cultivation of such affections, as his actual relations to others permit him to enjoy, often some of the quietest and purest, if not the most endearing satisfactions, which the society of home is capable of affording.

There is something fundamentally sound in every mind in which these affections flourish with kindly power; it is a great defect in any character, whatever may be its other accomplishments, to remain unmoved or sullen amidst the genial endearments which domestic life, in all its forms, is capable of affording; and there is great truth and propriety in the common remark, that "the character of a man may be better known from his conduct in his own house, than from any of the aspects which it assumes in more public life."

We may say the same thing of the purity and freshness of his *pleasures;* for the happiest, as well as the best man, is always the person, who conducts himself, amidst the duties and the enjoyments of home, with the greatest propriety, and the truest relish.

RELATION OF INTIMATE ASSOCIATES.

We no not here intend to enter upon the question respecting the nature and obligations of friendship, a subject which occupied so much of the attention of the great writers of antiq-

uity, and which, after them, has been discussed at great length by many modern authors of high name. Pythagoras, whose influence on the opinions of antiquity was so remarkable, and all whose ideas and institutions are so worthy of notice, insisted so much on the importance of this relation, that he has called it the "bond of all the virtues," and "Pythagorean friendships," not less than "Platonic loves," become phrases in common use.

We merely take it for granted, however, without entering on the niceties of this question, that almost every man has some individuals with whom he is more intimate than with others, to whom he is accustomed to unbosom himself freely, and in whose society he seeks relief from the languor which is apt to steal over all men from continued solitude, or from intercourse only with domestic relatives.

The choice of such associates, or intimate acquaintances, does not entirely depend upon ourselves; it results, in most cases, from the situation in life in which we happen to be placed, and from the greater or less extent of the opportunities of selection that are afforded us; for we take it for granted, that a man can scarcely live without some persons who stand to him in this relation, and that it is his duty to

avail himself of such opportunities of making the selection, as, by his peculiar situation in life, he is able to command.

There must, of course, be great variety in the sentiments with which men are bound to persons thus, in some measure, forced on their intimacy; and, in most cases, it is not to be inferred, that the rules relating to friendship, in the strictest sense of that term, are applicable to all the instances in which we find ourselves in intimacy with some individuals.

Nothing, however, is more certain, than that a man's happiness and character depend, to a very great degree, on the choice which opportunities have enabled him to make of his associates; and, indeed, this influence is far greater and more important than those who have not considered the subject are probably disposed to believe. We so naturally imbibe the sentiments and modes of action which belong to those into whose company we fall; and this influence is exerted over us so unconsciously and gradually, that even the firmest and most independent character could scarcely continue, under one unvarying influence of this kind, to display precisely the same aspect which it would have manifested if circumstances had forced it, for a considerable time, into an entirely different connexion.

No rule of life, then, is more important than that every man should endeavour, in so far as he has opportunity, to make a judicious and wise selection of those with whom he associates; because, upon the choice which he makes in this respect, his whole moral character, and his finest and most influential modes of feeling and acting will depend; and, consequently, his attainment or loss of the measure of worth and of happiness which is competent to him in life.

The choice being made, however, the following are the rules which must be observed by those who would conduct themselves as good men, in so far as this relation is concerned.

In the first place, perfect honor, and entire confidence of feeling, ought to pervade and sanctify this relation. Indeed, this trust in each other, independent of all the forms and rules that bind those who are not so connected, is the characteristic condition of this relation. In the great intercourse of life, we may be allowed to meet men on the supposition, that they will each be disposed to gain for themselves all the advantages which they can command, even at the expense of others, or, by availing themselves of their ignorance or weakness; and the rule commonly acted upon in

such general intercourse, whether well or ill-founded, is, that every man must look to himself. But, in our conduct towards our intimate friends, it must be understood, that the maxims of perfect honor and liberal feeling are at all times to be observed; and that the very circumstance of our standing to them in that relation presupposes the existence of this spirit of confidence and good intention. Intimates, in a word, must act towards each other on the principles of gentlemen, or men of honor, however the *great business* of life may be conducted by an attempt, on the part of each individual, to gain for himself all the advantages which his circumstances or talents enable him to command.

Besides this liberality of feeling and conduct, there must also be in him, who would approve himself a good associate or friend, a disposition to cement good feeling by *kindly actions*, or *services*.

And, in the last place, when circumstances demanding more strenuous exertion occur, he must be ready to stand by his friend, even at great hazard to himself, and to consider such hazard as justified by the sanctity of that relation, in which, during more easy and peaceful circumstances, he had placed himself to his associate.

In the domestic relation, then, which is the base of all others, it is chiefly the *natural affections* of the human heart that form the principle of union, and give to the relation its value and consecration; in the intercourse of intimate friends or associates, it is the *principle of honor and trust*, or a determination to act as men, who are disposed to take no improper advantage, but rather to throw all the narrow and selfish maxims *of the world* aside, and to treat each other with the free spirit and kind intentions of persons, who believe that they are met by corresponding sentiments on the part of those whom they trust.

A *good* friend or associate, consequently, is one who is possessed of this trustworthy disposition, who is also ready to do any act of kindness to those with whom he is connected, and who, in cases of emergency, will consider the relation of intimacy so sacred, as to justify him even in making great sacrifices for the sake of his friend.

One of the most fortunate things that can happen in the life of any man, or one of the best gifts which Providence, in its bounty, can have bestowed, is to have so ordered our lot, that we have it in our power, and are disposed to avail ourselves of the society of the worthy and accomplished.

RELATION OF NEIGHBOURS.

Natural feelings bind men strongly to each other, when they are connected by any of the closer relationships of life; and enlightened reflection on such relationships is fitted to add much to the force of these feelings, or to set them in a very interesting light.

It is interestiug to consider, that those who are born in the same family with ourselves have, of all the myriads of human beings, been placed by Nature in so close a connexion with our interests and feelings. It is, in the same manner, affecting to think, that our associates have also, of all human beings, been presented to our choice by the wise appointments of Divine Providence itself; and, by an extension of the same mode of thought, it is impossible not to feel, that those who come more immediately under our observation, by being placed in the same neighbourhood with ourselves, are strongly recommended to our love and sympathy by the reflection, that while there are innumerable human beings who people the same world with ourselves, our neighbours comprise the whole of this vast assemblage in

whose interests we can take a visible and palpable concern.

There are some situations, however, in which this relation is of more importance than others. In the crowd of great cities, our nearest neighbours are almost lost to our regard amidst the multitude of fellow-creatures who everywhere surround us, and this feeling of neighbourhood is, accordingly, in such situations, less entertained or regarded; but in smaller societies, the relation becomes more distinct and palpable, both because all the actions of our associates are brought more closely under observation, and because our happiness or comfort are more dependent on the good or bad fulfilment of the duties which that relation implies.

And it is hence, that, in all such situations, the epithet of a *good* neighbour is in common use, and is employed as a term of high commendation.

Indeed it is instructive and interesting to remark how much good or ill may be done by an individual in such situations, according as he is qualified to fulfil the demands of this relationship, or to neglect and abuse them.

We thus sometimes see a person whose presence adds immeasurably to the enjoyments and comfort of all who are connected with him,

who seems to have a pleasure in ministering to the gratification of others, and whose presence diffuses a feeling of serenity and satisfaction over the whole of the space to which his influence extends.

And there are other individuals of an opposite character, who are the dread and dislike of those who surround them, who seem to have a pleasure in promoting wrath and dissension wherever their influence extends, and whose single power is thus capable of blasting, or at least of taking greatly from, the enjoyment of existence within the little circle which, if they had been better disposed, it should have been their pleasure and study to have made happy.

A *good* neighbour, then, is one who, in the first place, makes it his business to promote *peace* and *good-will* among those who surround him, and who considers no attentions too small which are capable, in any degree, of augmenting the comfort or promoting the self-satisfaction of the human beings over whom his situation has given him influence.

This character will be enhanced, if, in the second place, the person who holds it is studious to promote all *plans* that are fitted to add to the substantial and permanent comfort of the society with which he is connected, who seeks

to beautify even the face of inanimate nature for their good, and is anxious to set such measures in operation as may gain them a high state of respectability and comfort.

It is farther necessary, to the perfection of this character, that it should have respect to the *moral improvement* of the beings whom it wishes to benefit; and as the moral and religious aspects of men are by far their highest and most important characteristics, every truly enlightened man will consider the exaltation of these as the most desirable of all the good deeds in which, for their welfare, he can busy himself.

In the last place, a *good example* in the individual himself who thus aims at the welfare of his neighbours, is among the most effectual of all the influences which he can put forth for their well-being; and he who wishes to do all the good that his situation and powers permit, will be especially careful, that, amidst his other labors, the evil influence of his own bad example may not detract from the amount of happiness which, by other means, he may be in a condition to effectuate.

It is interesting to think, that there is scarcely any man so limited in his powers, or humble in his station, as not to be capable of doing

much good, or promoting, by his kind and obliging behaviour, much happiness and comfort among his neighbours; and every man who wishes to give to his life its best possible character, will be especially anxious to acquit himself in this capacity to the utmost extent of his ability.

RELATION TO THE DISTRESSED.

Many circumstances in the arrangements of Nature point out the importance of the duties implied in this relation.

In the first place, the afflicted are everywhere brought under our notice; for there is no condition of life in which some individuals are not to be found who are legitimate objects of our pity and beneficence.

In the second place, every human being has his own share of suffering; and Nature seems thus to signify to the heart of every man, that she expects from him that assistance to his fellow-men, which becomes those who themselves know what it is to have been in sorrow.

In the third place, the feelings, which attach us to the case of the unfortunate, are among the most effective and powerful which have a place in our nature.

And, in the last place, the gratification of these feelings, by the performance of good deeds to the distressed, even where such active exertion is obstructed by the most revolting circumstances, is one of the purest and most delightful sources of pleasure which the heart of man is capable of enjoying; for most assuredly there is no person who has tasted the luxury of having been the cause of relief to the distressed, who would hesitate to prefer that pleasure to almost every other that belongs to our condition.

In conformity with these arrangements of Nature, it is interesting to remark, that the Author of Christianity has given to the virtue of active compassion to the afflicted a very important place in his system of duty.

His own example, indeed, was the finest of all patterns of this grace; for he went about healing the diseased, and comforting the sorrowful, and speaking peace to the afflicted; and he thus seemed to signify to men of all future times, that a similar occupation of their talent was the best employment to which they could devote it.

He has also enforced the practice of this duty by explicit exhortations, and illustrated it by some of his most beautiful parables.

And, in announcing the rule according to which every man shall at last be pronounced to have succeeded or failed in establishing for himself a title to the heavenly kingdom, it is preëminently striking to remark, that he has fixed on this single virtue as the rule of judgment. "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was naked, and ye clothed me: sick, and ye visited me: in prison, and ye came unto me.—— Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.—— Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

Every good man therefore must, in compliance with this recommendation of his Lord, devote himself sincerely and actively to the care of the distressed. In great cities, where multitudes of human beings are assembled, and where, of course, there must be many whose cases are apt to pass without being known or attended to, there are necessarily many opportunities for the exercise of this virtue; and it is pleasing to think, that the true genius of

the Christian faith has in this instance been distinctly felt, and, that, in all such accumulations of human beings, there are many who "seek out the cause which they know not," and who "go about doing good."

But there is no situation in which distress, in some form or other, may not be found; and a well-disposed mind can thus nowhere be without opportunities of exercising one of the most important virtues, and of tasting one of the purest pleasures of our human condition.

Mere sympathy, however, must not be considered as discharging all the obligations of this duty; on the contrary, there is no species of labor or of disgust which we must not be willing to encounter, if we would fully fulfil the commandment of our Lord; and he only who thus devotes himself to *active* exertions can feel the great recompense with which such labors of love are always fraught.

The reward itself, however, is of unspeakable value; and happy above all other men is he, of whom it can be said, that, like the benevolent Founder of our faith, he "goes about," wherever distress is found, "doing good."

RELATION TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONE US WRONG.

It is not only true, that there is great distress in life, but that no man can live amidst his fellow-men without being exposed to many things which, if taken keenly, are fitted to place him in a state of perpetual irritation and contest.

This could not well be otherwise, where every man is constituted the preserver of his own interests, where the motives of conduct are in a great measure hid from those who see only the outward actions which they prompt, and where interferences of interest are so apt either actually to occur, or to be apprehended as existing.

Much offence, or many causes of irritation, must therefore be constantly occurring to every man, unless he is fortified by principles and guided by habits which set him above this influence; and there are several obvious considerations which must have, in all ages, suggested the propriety of overlooking much of the offence with which life abounds, and of cultivating a spirit of forbearance and forgiveness.

For, in the first place, by far the greater number of these offences are of such a kind, that there is more real dignity in overlooking than in resenting them.

And, in point of fact, when we look back upon the multitude of offences that have formerly destroyed our peace, we are able to perceive, that, in by far the greater number of cases, they now seem to us scarcely worthy to have awakened even a passing feeling of irritation, and that our happiest reflections relate to those occasions on which we have been able to overlook and forgive them.

Nor, in the next place, is there any incompatibility between such forbearance and the most firm assertion of our own rights, or the most manly defence of our own dignity; on the contrary, men commonly appear little and pusillanimous exactly in proportion to their disposition to take offence, and no man is more feared in his *righteous indignation* than he who is habitually actuated by a spirit of peace.

In the last place, all just and enlightened views of human nature, and of the motives of human actions, lead to opinions respecting the actual motives of men, which have a tendency to lessen our offence at any interferences of interest which their conduct may seem to pre-

sent; and the same enlightened views also suggest, that more is in every case to be gained by conciliation and good temper, than by a hasty and forward assertion of our claims to respect.

In fact, it is obvious, that unless this good spirit of forgiveness is cherished somewhere or other, human life would become a scene of perpetual contention; and quarrels would but be aggravated and hostilities imbittered, till all regard to the original causes of wrath would be lost in the new sources of strife which the progress of the aggression could not fail to create.

We commonly describe this duty by the phrase "forgiving of injuries;" but perhaps a juster expression of its nature is that of "overlooking offences;" and this latter mode of speaking seems to convey at once an idea both of the true nature of the duty, and of the dignity which belongs to it.

This also, however, is a grace of great importance in the Christian system, and which, indeed, holds so conspicuous a place in it, that it has been considered as characteristic of it.

There is no question that exhortations to this "overlooking of offences" pervade the whole of the discourses of our Lord; and it is a

beautiful feature of his religion, that he has incorporated a recommendation to the discharge of this duty with our daily prayer.

Nor is the motive which he has suggested as proper to lead to this duty less worthy of our consideration; he has taught us to expect "forgiveness of our offences as we also forgive those who have offended us;" and the whole strain of his doctrine is fitted to suggest that we should be more anxious to obtain the remission of our sins against God, than to visit with relentless hostility the transgressions of our fellow-men.

Finally, he himself gave a beautiful and never-to-be-forgotten example of the exercise of this grace, when, under the endurance of the greatest of all outrages from mankind, he thus prayed for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Every good man, therefore, must, like his blessed Master, be "slow to wrath," and ready "to forgive;" he must overlook the multitude of offences; and be willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of peace. This conduct is manly and enlightened, and it is in the purest spirit of Christian charity.

RELATION TO SOCIETY IN GENERAL.

This relation leads to the consideration of *public spirit*, a virtue of a high order in the catalogue of graces, and preëminently fitted to give dignity and grace to human character.

Some constitutions of civil society are more favorable to the nourishment of this virtue than others; and in general it may be stated, that the constitutions of ancient times were better fitted to generate this grace than those which characterize modern communities. It was hence that the men of Athens and of Rome were led to take such an interest in all the affairs of the state, and that by means of this interest their characters assumed so high a rank among the men of all the times which history has recorded.

In almost all states, however, there is a disposition in the multitude of the people to overlook, or become insensible, to their relation to the community; their private cares occupy their whole attention, and they only become sensible of their connexion with a commonwealth by the demands which are occasionally made on them, often not very pleasant demands,

for their contributions to its support. They are, hence, often led to regard it rather with aversion than with respect; and all public spirit is sunk in their laborious endeavours to promote their own welfare, or is subverted by the dislikes which are generated by the exactions to which this connexion exposes them.

It is, however, a beautiful appointment of Nature, that even the multitude of men contribute most effectually to the good of the whole, by this laborious application to their private interests; and that the want of *public spirit* is supplied in them by the satisfaction which they derive from seeing the good effects of the public provisions in that flourishing state of their domestic concerns to which industry and perseverance, even in the humblest line, commonly lead.

But there are other individuals in every community who are especially called to the cultivation of this spirit; and a perfect character cannot exist where this lively and benevolent interest in the good of the whole is wanting.

Its existence in any individual implies the presence of enlightened and comprehensive views respecting the general good; it leads to some of the most manly and useful virtues that can expand the heart or beautify the

fancy, and it will manifest itself, whenever it exists, by a ready coöperation with every scheme that has as its object the improvement of the community in any form.

It is to the existence of this spirit in certain individuals that we are indebted for those fine specimens of human society which have commanded the respect of all times; and no works that are fitted to beautify or improve particular communities, are likely to be executed where this public interest in the affairs of the state is wanting.

Hence, this virtue derives its importance in the general description of a good life; and its attainment is one of the best and most beneficial states in which any mind can exist.

When well managed, it approaches man nearer, than even the due regulation of his private affairs, to the rank of a perfect subject of that universal kingdom which embraces the interests of all times and of all worlds.

It is, consequently, in a preëminent sense, a Christian virtue, and most suitable in the characters of those who aspire to be disciples of Him, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

RELATION TO THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, AND TO ALL THE INTELLIGENT OFFSPRING OF GOD.

This leads to the consideration of charity in the most extensive meaning of the term; and surely it might have been supposed that feeling, as men do, that they are all the inhabitants of one wonderful and magnificent world, all objects of the kind providence and tender mercy of God, all bound together by many common interests and wants, and all gifted with hopes and aspirations which lead them to anticipate some more glorious manifestations of the boundless love of their common Father, their most delightful thought would have been, that they are all members of one family, and all moving towards one final and greater home.

And this, assuredly, would be the prevailing feeling of men towards the whole human race, were it not for the operation of certain prejudices and erroneous modes of thought, which seem to have existed, under varying forms, at all times and in all countries, but which it is the business of true wisdom to remove, and by the removal of which only, it is possible to give

to mankind that "perfect charity" which embraces, in the bonds of brotherly love, the whole family of man.

These erroneous modes of conception may be reduced to the four following: —

In the first place, there seems to have prevailed among men at all times a belief that the whole human race are not equally objects of the essential benevolence of the Creator, but that some portions of them are regarded by him with partiality, and loaded with blessings, while others are shut out from any such testimonies of his regard.

In the second place, there is an equally general impression or belief, that some portions of the human race are not only useless as parts of the vast scheme of things, but hurtful to the promotion of those designs which God, by the arrangements of his universal kingdom, is carrying forward.

In the third place, the varieties of manners, of interests, and of moral character which exist among men, and which so remarkably discriminate some tribes and families from others, have been very generally regarded as legitimate causes of hatred or scorn on the part of those who considered themselves as possessed of the most approved distinctions.

And, lastly, it has been very generally believed that by far the greater portion of the human race are destined for eventful destruction, and reprobation, and are, consequently, not worthy of the brotherly kindness of those who regard themselves as the only destined inheritors of the heavenly kingdom.

We appeal to the consciousness of every individual whether these are not the impressions which mankind are disposed to entertain respecting the situation, the characters, and the destinies of each other, or of the greater portion of the richly-endowed family of which they form a part; and surely we cannot wonder that while such impressions remain, that charity, which embraces the whole offspring of God in impartial love, should be limited and perverted in its influence upon the human heart.

With the view, then, of counteracting these errors, it ought to be considered, in the first place, and with reference to the first of the misconceptions we have stated, that God has testified his essential love towards the whole human race, by having made them all partakers of many blessings, by having given them all equally a place in this magnificent portion of his dominions, by having made them all equally

objects of his providential care, and by having subjected each of them to as careful and kind a training as if for that individual alone the whole arrangements of nature and providence had been established.

God is indeed training them by different methods, and employing them for different purposes in the plan of his government; and hence he has gifted them with all varieties of powers and of opportunities; but all this is only because his essential benevolence is equal towards them all, and because he intends that that benevolence shall be displayed by employing them in purposes which, to his wisdom, appear best adapted for securing the good of the whole.

The most untutored wanderer amidst the wilds of Nature is thus equally cared for by God with the most enlightened and polished inhabitant of civilized society; and the common Father testifies his equal love for both, by having given them equally a place in his kingdom, and made them equally to feel that he is "daily loading them with his benefits."

The object to be gained, then, for the removal of this first error, is a clear apprehension of the distinction between the essential love of God, which is the same towards all his children,

and the *means* which he employs for the manifestations of his love, or the variety of *purposes* to which, for the promotion of his designs, he sees fit to destine the exertions of his creatures.

And with the view of removing the second error, which supposes that a vast portion of the human race are of no use in the kingdom of God, but, on the contrary, are hurtful to the promotion of its interests, we ought to settle with ourselves what we mean by the kingdom of God, and distinguish between the *measures* which he adopts for the promotion of his purposes, and that *grand and universal scheme*, for the eventual realization of which all the subordinate arrangements which vary the aspect of his dispensations are intended.

When we take this comprehensive view of the kingdom of God, as embracing the interests of all times and of all worlds, we shall find little difficulty in apprehending, that, however some individuals or nations may, to our limited and partial view, seem to act as impediments in the way of the progressive counsels of God, it is only because we see not at all moments the relation of these seeming obstacles to the actual movements, that we are led to view them as hindrances and hurtful interruptions, and that not only the varied talents and employments of

the different tribes of men, but even their vices and errors, and hostilities, are all made subservient, by an infinite and overruling Wisdom, to the advancement of a plan, which embraces the interests of the whole, and which is so comprehensive in its provisions, that no creature is called into existence which was not necessary for the eventual perfection of the grand and universal scheme.

We cannot, indeed, always tell in what manner Divine Providence so orders the exertions of individuals as to make them conspire, even while they seem to be acting most adverse to his purposes, in the establishment of his universal dominion; but, provided we extend our view of the purposes of his government to a sufficiently wide range, we can have no difficulty in believing that not a creature exists, whose being was not necessary for filling some place in the boundless purpose of God; and surely, the most delightful, and luminous, and satisfactory of all views, is that which thus represents to us, not only all the contemporaneous tribes of men, but all their successive generations, as forming one vast whole, or, indeed, as but portions of a still greater and more comprehensive whole, the infinite movements and exertions of all the individuals of which

are so guided and overruled by the boundless wisdom of God, as to aid, with all their individual efforts, in the promotion of one entire and final result.

By such comprehensive views of the purposes of Providence, one of the most mischievous of all the errors that lessen the mutual charity of mankind is taken away; and, instead of thinking that we are entitled to regard any portion of the human race as worthy only of our detestation or scorn, because they seem to us to be useless or noxious parts of the Divine system, we are led to the far more just and luminous conclusion, that many, who to us seem "first" in the promotion of the purposes of God, "may be last, and the last first;" or that, when our view is extended over a sufficiently wide range, some portions of mankind, who seemed to us to be of least importance in the scheme of things, may be found to have been contributing more effectually and extensively to the promotion of the final result, than even those apparently more favored races, or nations, or individuals, who presumed to believe, that, without them, the grand purposes of Omnipotence could not have attained their consummation, or, at least, that they only had occupied those important stations,

on which the vast interests of the moral dominion of God were chiefly dependent.

With the view of removing the third source of error on this most important topic, I mean the mistaken belief, that the wonderful diversities of manners, of interests, or even of moral character, which exists among the nations and individuals of our race, are legitimate causes of hatred or scorn on the part of those who have adopted what they consider to be the most approved maxims or modes of life, it should be considered that these varieties are but manifestations, with respect to the human race, of a plan which pervades all the works and ways of Providence; insomuch, that of all the individuals that have existed, that now exist, or that are ever to be called into existence, whether in the intellectual, the vegetative, or the inorganic kingdoms, no two will ever be found, whose whole natures and qualities are in every respect the same. And the idea naturally arises from this view of the arrangements of Providence, that it is by the very means of these varieties that each individual or portion of the whole is adapted for filling a definite place, and promoting the evolution of a distinct result in the entire scheme; so that these varieties, considered as applicable to the human race, instead of

being viewed as causes of aversion, ought only, if we took a sufficiently wide view of things, to enhance our feelings of kindness towards all the partakers of a nature, so boundless in its manifestations, and of which every particular manifestation so evidently contributes to a beneficial result.

Nor ought even the vast differences in point of moral worth, which exist among men, to be viewed as an exception to this remark, or be considered as justifying us in treating with hatred any individual or portion of our race. For God and all good beings look not with hatred, but with pity, on the wanderings and follies of men; and as there is no human being so pure as not to have much that is imperfect in his nature, so neither is there any so sunk in vice as not to have something that is worthy of the fostering care of Providence, and that is prophetic of the victory which goodness, even when most overpowered by sin, shall yet attain in the gracious empire of God. It is our duty farther to recollect, that the greatest offenders will, in every case, be found to have been those who have had the fewest opportunities of knowing what was good or the greatest temptations to do what was evil; and that, in all cases, there is more of weakness and of misfortune than of

positive preference of evil even in the conduct of those, who, to our common modes of observation and of thought, seem to be covered with the most presumptuous guilt.

With such views, we shall be disposed to entertain a far juster and more Christian idea of the sources of that guilt, which, to the sinner himself, is so awful a source of his own unhappiness, than is suggested by the thoughts we are more in the habit of indulging, and should feel, not our hostility, but our pity and tenderness, awakened towards a race of beings, who are all laboring under one common calamity, but who are all, likewise, subjects of that "grace and forgiving mercy," which God has been pleased, by the mission of his beloved Son, to offer, with boundless pity, to even "the chief of sinners."

In the last place, such views open up to us very different prospects from those commonly entertained respecting the final condition of all the varieties of men, and dispose us to believe and to triumph in the belief, that when our view of the Divine kingdom is extended over a sufficiently wide space, there is no individual of the whole family of man, of whom we are entitled to say, that he may not yet, under the ameliorating discipline of Divine goodness and wis-

dom, become a fellow-inheritor with ourselves of all the happiness, and all the glory, which the future revolutions of the universe, conducted as these are by infinite wisdom, and love, and power, are yet, in the lapse of everlasting ages, to disclose.

And thus we are permitted to consider ourselves as all belonging to a family, which is finally to be gathered into "one fold under one Shepherd," — and which, though sent, like the different members of the same households in time on different paths of life, and with different purposes in view, are yet not less children of the same common home, and equal objects of the paternal love of God.

This is the charity of the Gospel, in its widest and purest form; and, as there is no mode of thought relative to the whole human race, and, indeed, to the countless offspring of God, that is so pleasant to be indulged, that seems to cover the whole face of creation with such resplendent and beautifying lustre, or that is so friendly to all the best affections and most useful sympathies of the human heart, it is the more to be regretted, that the prevailing errors of mankind so much dispose them to adopt very different views, and to consider themselves rather as rivals and enemies, than as members

of one family, and final heirs of one heavenly inheritance.

To all his other excellencies, however, a truly good, and wise man must add charity, which is the "very bond of perfectness;" and it is hence that we see how justly the Author of our religion raised this grace to the high rank in his system which it unquestionably holds, and how finely, after branching out into all the duties that bind men together in the more contracted circles of life, as members of one household, as friends and associates, as neighbours, as inhabitants of a world where there is much suffering, as exposed, in their intercourse with each other, to many causes of offence, and as subjects of the same commonwealth, it rises, by these gradations, to its most comprehensive form, and embraces, in the spirit of universal love, the whole family of mankind, and all that feel and think within the boundless expanse of the Creator's empire.

Such is charity, that "most excellent of all gifts, the very bond of perfectness, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God;" and the most richly-gifted minds, and they who in their attainments approach nearest to the true spirit of the Gospel, are they who feel this grace in its most comprehensive and abiding influence.

And so "now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS RESPECTING THE OPINION WE SHOULD FORM OF MEN, AND THE BEST MODE OF ACTING WITH THEM.

Our first observation relates to the opinion we should entertain respecting mankind in general, notwithstanding any experience we may have had of their worthlessness or cruelty.

Most men, who have had large intercourse with the world, have had occasion to express themselves, sometimes, with much unrestrained asperity respecting the inherent worthlessness and want of principle or of good feeling in men; and this impression sometimes degenerates into a contemptuous or hostile feeling with respect to human nature in general.

This, however, is a feeling against which every good man ought to be upon his guard. Even the failings of men should be considered with forbearance; for it is, at all times, better to think well of mankind than to entertain any

opinions that dispose us to undervalue the nature of which we are partakers; and more comprehensive views of the motives, even of the most worthless portion of our race, will go far to undo any impressions as to their essential baseness, or rather will but strengthen our wish to improve and to bless them.

It is, at the same time, true, that there are aspects of the conduct of mankind which are fitted to give us melancholy impressions of what, not only as individuals, but as communities, they are capable of doing when their prejudices or passions are concerned, or have been strongly touched. But these aspects ought not to lessen our good will to the interests of mankind as a race; we may be sorry for their aberrations, we may be humbled because we also belong to a family of beings so liable to act contrary to their own best interests, and to their duty as subjects of the kingdom of God; but if our own minds are not in a state of perversion, such views will but augment our desire to be useful to mankind, and will only awaken our pity for their abuse of gifts which were intended to lead them to far better conduct.

Generally, it is of the utmost importance to every good man, to cherish an unfeigned and

deep affection for the interests of *human nature;* and, notwithstanding any casual impressions which his experience of their malice may have given him, to be only more desirous, from such experience, of being an instrument in the hands of Providence of doing them effectual service.

This unfeigned love of mankind has always been an attribute of the most excellent minds that have adorned or blessed our nature; and it is one of the most healthful and delightful feelings which can be recommended to the cultivation of men.

But, in the second place, it is true that, in most cases, those who devote themselves to the service of mankind on a great scale, or who wish to do them much good, must lay their account with meeting with opposition, and, indeed, should be prepared, if circumstances should demand the sacrifice, even to lay down their lives for their well-doing.

We do not mean by this that mankind ever set themselves knowingly and designedly against that which is good and praiseworthy, under a distinct impression that it is such; we believe, on the contrary, that so decided is the human heart in its love of virtue, that it is only when the true nature of what is excellent is hid from the view of men by their passions or prejudices,

that they ever have been induced to treat it with injustice; and we think there is great truth in the very beautiful remark which has been sometimes made, that no man ever heartily devoted himself to the service of mankind without receiving from them testimonies of affection, and of gratitude, which have occasionally melted his heart, and given him the highest ideas of the value of the nature which he sought to benefit.

At the same time it is true that men are strongly attached to their customs and to long-established institutions and modes of thought or of worship, that they are seldom able to form very just ideas of what is for their real good, and that their passions are easily awakened when arts are used to persuade them that their habitual institutions or customs are in danger; and it is easy to understand, that from the effect of all this, those, who are anxious to be the instruments of great changes in the opinions or institutions of men, are in danger of much opposition to their measures, may be exposed to much misrepresentation and injustice, and may even meet with extreme cruelty.

This subject naturally leads us to a third remark, namely, that mankind are often em-

ployed as instruments in the hand of Providence for the infliction of those sorrows which he sees fit to impose for purposes of good.

God sometimes employs the evil passions of men as instruments for punishing the delinquencies of their fellows; and it is not unusual, in private life, to see sometimes the wise and the strong subjected, as a punishment or correction of their faults, to the contumely or oppostion of men, who, upon the whole, are far inferior in both wisdom and power to those over whom Divine Providence, for good purposes, has given them a temporary influence.

It is of great importance for those who wish to be benefitted by the dispensations of Providence, to be aware how they ought to act, when God is thus giving them as it were "into the hands of men," as a correction of their, it may be, "secret faults."

Injustice certainly and cruelty ought never to be submitted to by man from his fellow-men; but there are times when a thoughtful man will be made aware that the hand of God is in the offence which his brethren are committing against him; and his duty in such cases, while he carefully avoids every thing that might seem to sanction the injustice of his enemies, is reverently to bow to the dispensations of Provi-

dence, to use the opposition of men as a mean of bettering his own conduct, and with devout submission to acknowledge that "God turneth the wrath of man as he does the rivers of water, and that the remainder of that wrath he can restrain."

In the last place, it is important for those who have to act with mankind, to be able to exercise that fine compound of firmness and of complaisance, in which the true beauty, and most useful result of human conduct consists.

Few men attain to this perfection in conduct. Many men have had reason to regret having been *too easy* in their treatment of mankind; and a yet greater number, perhaps, have sunk their feelings of kindness in the habitual *sternness* of their mode of dealing with others.

We formerly remarked, when treating of the active employments of men, that the most desirable style of conduct is that which unites liberality of principle and of general behaviour, with strict attention to the forms of business; and a similar principle is applicable to the social intercourse of men with each other; for he best avails himself of the services of mankind, makes most of them, attaches them most firmly to himself, and gives his style of behav-

iour its most becoming excellence, who is kind and gentle to all men; but who, at the same time, never relaxes in that vigilance which prevents all imposition, or in that energy which guides the exertions of all who are under his influence to their most useful purposes.

Those who have the training of youth know that the teachers, who best gain the affections of their pupils, who have least occasion for severity, and who most effectually do their work, are those who are watchful to repress even the slightest disposition to perversity or negligence, and whose love for their charge is, by such perfection of discipline, permitted to display itself without all irritation; and the same rule is applicable to the whole conduct of mankind with each other. Kindness and energy must go together in every character that is fitted to make the most of that relationship in which Providence has placed mankind with each other, and by means of which they are destined to be fellow-workers in one great cause.

And thus it is that man, in his intercourse with his fellow-men, as well as in all his other engagements, still supports the character of a good or loyal subject of the universal kingdom, feeling intensely his relation to all

the other subjects of the same dominion, and anxious so to avail himself of his connexion with them, as to render both them and himself most available for the fulfilment of the purposes, which Divine wisdom intended that they should accomplish, by having called them to the high honor of being his subjects, and instruments, under him, of promoting the interests of his reign upon earth.

Thus far with respect to the social relations. We shall proceed, in the next place, to some further observations which seem to be necessary for completing the picture of a Good Life, which we are at present engaged in sketching.

GENERAL ASPECTS OF LIFE.

In addressing ourselves to the consideration of this subject, we revert to our original idea, which represents to us life as capable of being arranged according to the divisions of a day.

But we now leave out of consideration that succession of days and nights which make up the natural course of our lives, and we regard the *whole of life* as forming one great day, during the progress of which the series of events is carried on with an uninterrupted flow, both "while we wake and while we sleep," and throughout the course of which certain principles may be discovered, giving to the distinct trains of events certain *aspects*, from which the character of our existence derives a peculiar *complexion* during certain of its portions.

We suppose, then, a man to look back with serious thought on the whole course of the events that have made up his life; and we imagine, that on such a review he cannot fail to

be struck with certain *general appearances* which the events of his life have assumed, and which we here designate by the terms *general aspects of life.*

These aspects are varied, in their individual effects, according to the infinite cases of the individuals that pass over the scene of life; insomuch, that no two individuals will ever be found, whose experience of the course of events has been in all respects the same. But still, there is no individual who will not find that the *general aspects* to which we now allude have marked his destiny, or who will refuse to admit, that these aspects of life are accordant with the actual appearances of events.

Now it must be kept in mind, that the grand principle which pervades this work is that which inculcates that the object proposed to man, as a subject of the kingdom of God, is that of doing well the duty pointed out to him by the peculiar combinations of circumstances amidst which the course of his earthly history has placed him; and it follows, that the aspects of events which we are about to notice must be attended to by every person who would fulfil that duty in a proper manner; because these aspects may, under another appellation, be described as the *laws* which regulate the course

of events through which every individual, according to his particular circumstances, has been ordained to pass.

It is, consequently, only by attending to these laws, or general aspects of the course of events, and accommodating his conduct to them, that he can acquit himself in a suitable manner of the duty prescribed to him, or as a true subject of that kingdom, in which, as an active and moral being, he has his place.

FIRST ASPECT OF LIFE,—A STRUGGLE FOR MASTERY BETWEEN THE LOWER AND THE HIGHER POWERS OF OUR NATURE.

Every man, in looking back upon the course of his mortal history, will perceive, that he has all his life long been in danger of losing the true beauty, and worth, and happiness of his nature, from the constant and powerful operation of those inferior propensities, which enter into the constitution of his complex frame, and that his first duty is to keep his nature in its proper dignity, grace, and worthiness.

Sometimes we consider human nature as made up of two distinct sets of principles or propensities. The former are those which connect us with this earth, and with the lower animals that surround us in life; the latter belong to us as beings who are capable of considering themselves as connected with a higher and purer state of being, and by the possession of which our nature seems to be essentially distinguished from that of the other creatures which are governed only by animal and sensual propensities.

At other times, we consider our nature as but one whole, made up of various powers, which possess different *degrees* of rank and excellence, and some of which bear on them the stamp of an authority which entitles them to govern and direct the others.

But whichever of these two modes of viewing the constitution of our nature we adopt, the result to which we are led is the same; namely, that we fall below the proper level of our nature, when we permit ourselves to be governed by our merely animal propensities, and that we only attain the true dignity of our being, when we chiefly cultivate our higher propensities, and make them the directors of our whole modes of feeling and acting.

It is when we thus surrender ourselves to the guidance of our higher and finer powers and sentiments, that our nature assumes what has been called its true "moral expression;" that we seem to be beings of a loftier and purer nature than any of the other creatures that are associated with us in life; and, especially, that we assume the aspect of creatures who feel their subjection to an invisible Sovereign, and who have been enabled to conduct themselves under the dignified character of subjects of his kingdom.

Men offend against this constitution of their nature, and so far lose their true place and dignity in existence, when they yield themselves up to merely animal or sensual gratifications; but a propensity to such indulgences makes part of every man's nature, and is gifted with great power; and hence, our whole earthly history, if we are true subjects of the kingdom of God, must be a struggle with these inferior propensities, and a corresponding endeavour to preserve, in their true strength and influence, all those higher and finer aspirations that give to our nature its proper dignity and grace.

On the other hand, we act suitably to our place in life, and to the true excellence of the nature bestowed on us, when we resolutely set

ourselves against every solicitation that might tarnish the moral dignity and beauty of our characters; when we cherish an habitual feeling of the native excellence and grandeur of our powers; and when we endeavour to act as beings whose true happiness must be found, not in mere animal gratifications, but in the indulgence of all pure and holy dispositions.

This is the very first duty incumbent on us as men; for, without this, our natures cannot assume the dignity of "Living Temples," which must be free from every thing that is mean, and every thing that is defiled, and must be filled with all pure and holy associations.

Or, by a change of figure, and a different mode of speech, it is thus only that we become true subjects of the kingdom of God; for "his kingdom consisteth not in meat or in drink; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Every person must perceive how powerfully the virtues of temperance, of superiority to animal gratifications, of becoming self-respect, and generally of all the graces that give to our nature its *moral* expression, are recommended and enforced by this consideration, and how utterly unfit those persons are to be regarded either as "Living Temples," or true "subjects

of the kingdom of God," who fail in this first and most indispensable of all the duties incumbent on them as men. "Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that ye are the Temple of God? but if any man *defile* the Temple, him will God destroy."

SECOND ASPECT OF LIFE, — A SCENE OF LABOR AND CARE.

Every man who looks back upon the series of events that have made up his history, will perceive, in the second place, that his whole life has been a contention with circumstances of labor and trouble; that pleasure and repose have only come to him as it were incidentally, and at distant intervals; and that the purpose of Providence seems to have been to keep him on the alert, by presenting to him trials fitted to exercise his powers, and to call forth his virtues sometimes by apparently very severe and distressing circumstances.

It is from the aspect of life, which we have now noticed, that we hear so much of the cares, and labors, and trials that enter into the lot of

all men; and that no strain of reflection is more common with those who are either departing from life, or who are reviewing its progress with contemplative calmness, than that of its having been to them only a series of struggles, which, by a strange fatality, has seemed to attend them from the first moment of life throughout all its subsequent stages.

At the same time, there is no considerate man who will not be convinced, upon such a review of the labors and difficulties that have made up his course of life, that these have been wonderfully adapted, by Divine Providence, to the strength he possessed for encountering them, and to the means that were afforded him of ultimately turning them to his own advantage; for the Supreme Disposer, by whom all lots are arranged, has in no instance called man to a service inadequate to his strength; and to those who put forth the power that is in them, he commonly evinces his superintending and strengthening care, by furnishing them with many advantages which enable them to pass through their trials with triumph.

It is therefore a great mistake into which men fall, when they regard life simply as a season of enjoyment or repose, or when they are only gratified when they can make its varied

struggles and contentions redound to their own gratification. It is under a far higher and nobler aspect, that the Author of being intended that it should be regarded, as a scene on which man has been placed, that he may evince his loyalty and fidelity by the promptitude, and energy, and cheerfulness with which, in obedience to the appointment of God, he meets all the successive labors, and difficulties, and occurrences that may be ordained to constitute his mortal history.

Men, therefore, offend against this condition of their being, when they are indolent, or timid, or visionary, or selfish, or prefer their own gratifications to the discharge of the duty set before them, however apparently hard that duty may seem to them to be, or when they distrust the wisdom or superintending goodness of that Being who has called them to their labors, and in whose assistance and care they ought to put entire and unconditional confidence.

And, on the other hand, they act conformably to this aspect or condition of life, when they are ready to embrace every opportunity of exertion which the course of events may put in their way; when they scorn their own ease, that they may show their fidelity to the Sovereign who has appointed them their task; and

when they have more pleasure in doing their duty, than in tasting any enjoyments which it may enable them to procure, that is to say, when they make the very act of doing their duty their most valued enjoyment, and when they have full confidence in the wisdom and goodness of that Being who has mercifully proportioned their tasks to their endowments, or who, to use a familiar expression, "never sends any man a warfare on his own charges," and who ultimately gives "glory and honor" to those who do well the work assigned them.

The value of these qualities is sometimes strikingly exemplified in the conduct of those who, in the ordinary transactions of life, and especially in some of its most laborious and active stations, are acknowledged to be the best servants of those who have earthly command; and we readily admit the excellence of him, who, in warfare, or amidst the vicissitudes and perils of sea, is ever ready to do the work which circumstances suggest, who loves the labor for the opportunity which it gives him of showing his fidelity, and who would at any time rather have an opportunity of being actively useful, than indolently resign himself to his own selfish enjoyments.

These are the most perfect men in all such situations; and we have only to extend the

comparison to the situation of all men, as servants of the great Master of the universe, or to consider ourselves as all engaged in one warfare which he has appointed us, or as embarked in the same vessel, in which our posts are assigned by his universal care.

Under this view of our condition in this world, the best servant is assuredly not the man who merely professes the most entire veneration or love to his master, or who has, it may be, the truest *delight* in expressing his attachment, but rather that servant who meets all the hazards of the warfare or the voyage with the most prompt and cheerful energy, who delights in the service, even when it seems hardest, as being the appointment of a master whom he reverences and loves, and who has no doubt, that, in the end, all his labors, though he may not at present perceive their results, are to be richly rewarded.

The conclusion, then, which we are entitled to draw from this aspect or condition of life is, that the best subject of the kingdom of God is the man who addresses himself to the labors, and trials, and afflictions of life with the most ready good-will, and who perseveres in the discharge of them with the most affectionate trust in the good providence of God.

THIRD ASPECT OF LIFE, — A SERIES OF CONNECTED EVENTS.

In looking back upon life, we shall perceive, in the third place, that its events have formed a continuous or unbroken series; that nothing that has occurred was entitled to be considered as an end, which had no relation to what was to follow it, but, on the contrary, as a mean, subservient to the attainment of other advantages that were still in prospect, and that thus it has been but one series of labors and trials, with respect to which, as they individually occurred, we were not entitled to say that no farther call for our exertions was to be made.

In general we view events, as they actually make their appearance upon the surface of life, under an aspect in some degree different from this. We seem to have a certain order of results set before us, towards the attainment of which our efforts are successively directed; when one of them is gained, we no doubt direct our attention to another, but still we consider that which has been secured as ultimate in itself; and, in this view, we appear to be placed successively in the midst of a series of changes, or to be successively pursuing a series of results, for the attainment of which the

intermediate events are alone valuable, and which, at any rate, constituted, as they successively came within our reach, distinct and ultimate points for us.

But the truth is, that life is not in reality this series of distinct and ultimate points, but one vast concatenation of events, some portions of which place themselves more obviously and prominently in our view, and seem to have a more important influence on our happiness, while other portions of the series fall more into shade, take a less definite or perceptible aspect, and seem to have but an incidental and subordinate relation to the greater and more momentous portions of the whole.

We accordingly find, that, in the actual course of things, events of great moment have their origin in circumstances of such apparent insignificance, that, at the time of their occurrence, they scarcely solicited our attention, and we ought, hence, to have been made aware, that the minutest events have *as real* a connexion with what is to follow as the most conspicuous, sometimes *as influential* a connexion, and that, in truth, the relative importance of these two orders of events, the apparently great and the apparently trivial, is more dependent on our powers of perception, or on the nature of the objects to which we attach importance,

than on the essential value and real influence of the events themselves.

Taking this, then, as the actual constitution of the order of events, it is plain, that, in order to avail ourselves of them in the most perfect manner, we not only should be prompt and energetic in our conduct, but persevering in the use of all the opportunities that are put in our power, never viewing any advantage or event as final, but rather as leading to some more distant good, and thus connecting the whole incidents of life by the unremitting diligence with which we apply ourselves to the improvement of them.

It has been finely remarked, that the difference between those generals whose success has produced the most important results, and commanded the fullest measure of admiration from mankind, and those ordinary commanders, who more commonly appear in the operations of war, consists chiefly in this, that whereas the latter seem to consider their powers as exhausted or their purpose secured, when they have merely gained a battle, as if the very gaining of the battle were the *purpose* for which all their efforts had been made, the former, on the contrary, consider the gaining of victories as but means to the attainment of other triumphs, or the securing of other and still

receding advantages; and that thus they have no sooner routed their enemy, than they proceed, as if but one step to their ultimate object had been secured; and war becomes, in their mode of carrying it on, not a series of distinct and ultimate results, but one combined scheme of great, and various, and well-concerted operations. This assuredly has been the character of the mode of warfare adopted by the greatest of the commanders whom our own times have witnessed.

Now, the great mistake which men commit in the minor details of ordinary life is this, that having been for some time in pursuit of some object which seemed to them of importance to their comfort or interest, they have no sooner gained this than they sit down in indolence or self-indulgence, as if now the game of life was finished, and they had nothing more to do for securing its triumphs. It is, accordingly, in these very moments of relaxation that the foundation is not unfrequently laid of future disgraces and future sorrows; and events which were deemed too insignificant to be regarded, thus often eventually manifest their power by becoming the origin of changes that cover our days with sadness and dismay, or, at any rate, that alter for a time the course

of prosperity in which we had previously moved.

But, in opposition to all this, a true subject of the kingdom of God, that is to say, a man who is anxious to avail himself of the events amidst which he is placed, in the most effectual manner, must accustom himself to consider all advantages as not so much valuable on their own account, as for the facility which they give of attaining other and more distant advantages; and the whole of life must thus be viewed as a service of unremitting perseverance in the trust committed to us.

It is far from being our intention to insinuate by these observations, however, that man should make himself the slave of events; or that no moments of repose and of enjoyment are permitted to him for the solace of his labors; but it is an instructive part of the arrangements of Divine Providence, in dispensing pleasures to men, that those arrangements are best relished, and of the truest kind, which are tasted as they offer themselves, without being looked to as objects of desire; and the best and happiest state in which any man can exist, is that which disposes him to consider *duty itself* as his pleasure, or to be more gratified by conducting well the trust committed to him, than by sitting down indolently to taste any enjoyments which

the good management of that trust may incidentally bring him.

It is a high qualification in a true subject of the Divine kingdom to be thus unremitting in the performance of the duties presented to him; for we proceed, in these illustrations, upon the idea which is common to all the parts of this treatise, that the duty prescribed to man, or the object set before him as a subject of the kingdom of God, is the right management of the interests committed to him by his place in life, and by the series of events amidst which he finds himself; and it is plain, that he who is not only most prompt, and active, and cheerful in availing himself of these events, but most persevering and unremitting in his exertions, must do his work in the most effectual manner and be thus the most approved servant of him who has sent him on this warfare of life.

FOURTH ASPECT OF LIFE, — A SCENE EVOLVING UNEXPECTED ISSUES.

Every man, in looking back upon his own history, will perceive, that the course of events in his life has, to a certain extent, assumed a direction which he had it not in his power

entirely to control, that in the progress of his life results have constantly been coming forth different from those which he could have anticipated, and, indeed, that at no time is he capable of stating, even for the shortest coming period of his history, what shall be the precise tenor of his future days.

It is thus a common remark, that no man can say through what wonderful and unexpected events he may yet have to move; and it is with reference to this aspect of life that it has been said by the poet, that there is a "power unseen,"

> "Which shapes our purposes,
> Rough hew them how we may."

There is even, in a certain sense of the expression, what may be called the influence of *fortune* in life. We are far from meaning by that term, that there is any thing of chance in our history, or that there is no presiding care in the train of events through which we are destined to proceed. On the contrary, we think that those parts of our lot which seem to have this character impressed on them, only have it because we are incapable of tracing the fineness of the wisdom by which they are pervaded, that thus God accommodates his plans to principles of our constitution, and purposes of our destiny, much beyond the reach of our limited compre-

hension, and that hence we express merely our own inability to assign the causes or connexions of events, when we ascribe them to fortune or chance.

It is, however, from the operation of this secret accommodation to our finer powers or destinies, that there are often certain advantages of life, which a man easily acquires, or which seem almost to be forced upon him, while in other respects all his labors are baffled, or disappointments seem to cross his path, notwithstanding all his endeavours to avoid encountering them.

There are times, too, in the life of the same individual, when all things go well with him, even without much apparent effort or attention on his part; and there are other times when the tide of circumstances sets so powerfully against him, that his utmost exertions are unavailing to stop its progress.

Indeed, the more carefully and comprehensively we survey our lives, the more shall we be satisfied of the operation of such secret influences on the course of our history; and though there is certainly nothing of chance or of unintentional destiny in all this, the effect is yet such as to give to our lives the aspect of our being at all times placed in the midst of circumstances which we cannot control, and

which eventually issue in results different from those which we can anticipate.

And what, then, is to be the rule of our conduct amidst such circumstances? Our duty undoubtedly is, to exercise *caution* in the choice of our measures of conduct, *vigilance* in finding out the best opportunities for the employment of our powers, and generally a *tender sense* of what it becomes us to do in order that we may accommodate ourselves to the intentions of Divine Providence respecting us.

It was hence that Socrates said he had "a demon," or good genius, which whispered to him respecting the measures of his conduct; that is to say, his fine perception of consequences yet to be disclosed, suggested hints, as distinct as if they had been spoken by "a voice," respecting the probable course which events would assume; and if it did not enable him to say what was *best to be done*, it at least suggested to him what it was expedient that in the actual combination of circumstances he *should avoid*.

Every man, in fact, has in the same manner his good genius or demon, if he puts himself into a condition to attend to its suggestions.

And these suggestions are best heard when the mind is preserved calm, and vigilant, and

when no passions are nourished which have a tendency to stifle its intimations.

Hence, also, we see the reason why the great moralist maintained, that his demon only suggested to him "to beware," that is to say, only hinted what he *should avoid*, but did not expressly point out to him *what course of conduct* he should adopt. The reason is, that it is chiefly amidst circumstances in which we seem to be under the guidance of a power superior to our own, that this warning voice is perceptible, and what it suggests is not that we should adopt measures calculated to counteract the flow of events, but only that we should beware of doing any thing that may be inconsistent with their result, or that may have a tendency to perpetuate impending evils.

And this is the true rule of conduct on such occasions. When a man feels that events are bearing him forcibly onward, it is his duty to yield, though with prudence and circumspection, to the pressure of circumstances; and especially to "take care" that he may do nothing which may increase the evil he is fated to endure.

In short, caution, vigilance, and a tender regard to the intimations of circumstances, are the virtues which, in all such seasons, it is the duty of every man to cherish.

We thus show ourselves to be true subjects of the kingdom of God, or faithful servants of that Master who has sent us on our warfare, and who hints to us, by the circumstances amidst which, without our choice, he sees fit to place us, what is the line of conduct along which we should move, and how far we should resign ourselves to the pressure of events with humble confidence in the ultimate rectitude of his plans for our welfare.

There is thus no doubt much wisdom in availing ourselves of events, when we feel that we have the power of bending them to our purposes; but there is also great beauty and evident propriety of conduct in resigning ourselves to their guidance, when we feel that a hand far mightier than our own is guiding the course of things, and giving a direction independent of our will to the circumstances that surround us.

And a good servant may show his fidelity as effectually by the caution, and vigilance, and tender sense of duty with which he listens to such intimations of the will of his Lord, as by the promptitude, and energy, and cheerfulness, with which he avails himself of such opportunities as he seems to have the power of managing.

LAST ASPECT OF LIFE, — AN UNFINISHED SCENE.

In meditating on the course of events, we cannot avoid perceiving, in the first place, that the plan of Providence, with respect to every man, has, in so far as this life is concerned, an appearance of being broken off before it has reached its termination. There is, hence, much of mystery and darkness in our lot; great evils sometimes are the portion of those who are eminently good, and humble, and affectionate; and, at any rate, the last stage of life is almost to all men a season in which their powers of endurance are tried to the uttermost, and during which, virtues are called into exercise which are, however, disappointed of their result, or have no definite reward, so far as this world and the connexion of events, which we are able to trace, are concerned. Ruin and desolation seem to be the fate of all men, when this concluding point of their connexion with this world has been reached.

This, no doubt, is a melancholy aspect of things, but it is also an aspect full of interest and of instruction; for it is from amidst these very appearances of ruin, that the highest promises of our destiny are made apparent, and that

man feels himself called on to give the last and most trying evidence of his confidence in the kind intentions of Providence.

His first duty, amidst such circumstances, evidently is to meet them with calmness and submission, because these, as well as all the previous parts of his lot, have been the appointment of Providence; and the wisdom, which has marked all the other portions of his life, ought to be to him a pledge, that, whether he can perceive its operation or not, it is still presiding over those issues of his life which seem most mysterious and threatening.

But calmness and submission do not exhaust the whole of human duty amid such circumstances; or rather there are still higher privileges and exercises of thought and of affection which, in these apparently disastrous combinations of events, we are permitted to indulge; for not only wisdom, but goodness and loving-kindness, and a parental solicitude for our best interests, have marked the whole of the conduct of Divine Providence towards us; and, especially, we have never had reason to believe, that God has at any time called us to a severe trial of our fidelity, without having in view some recompense or some manifestation of his bounty and favor proportioned to our endurance. Every

good man, therefore, is entitled to rejoice when God seems to send him on a hard service, because in that service he has a pledge that "an exceeding great reward" is awaiting his fidelity; and surely, when the last and most appalling of all trials is set before us, it would be undutiful to believe, that a different result is to mark the conduct of Providence from that which has followed from all preceding endurances.

We show ourselves, then, to be true subjects of the kingdom of God, by meeting the concluding scenes of life, not only calmly and resignedly, but cheerfully and full of good hope and confidence in the future disclosures of the plans of Providence; because, by the exercise of such virtues, in these circumstances we say, that we consider "goodness and mercy to have followed us all our days;" and that we are satisfied that God is not acting towards us upon a different plan, now that the concluding scenes of life are before us, and when we are summoned upon by far our hardest and most appalling service.

We shall have occasion again to advert to these considerations in the conclusion of the Work.

With respect to the different aspects of life now noticed, it may be remarked in general,

that they have all a respect to *actual* occurrences, and point out the *rules* according to which we ought to act, so as to avail ourselves of these for the production of the most desirable results. Our remarks accordingly have proceeded throughout on the supposition, that the just management of *actual events* is the true duty given us to fulfil, and not the indulgence merely of abstract or vague sentiments and feelings, that is to say, of feelings and sentiments distinct from the actual events amidst which our station in life has placed us; and the *aspects of life* we have now been considering are certain general principles maintained by Providence in the exhibition of these events, and pointing out the rules, by the aid of which we may best accommodate ourselves to the Divine plans.

We are far from supposing that we have adverted, in the preceding remarks, to all the important aspects of life which might have been noticed, and by which rules of great moment for the regulation of conduct might have been suggested. On the contrary, we have only selected the preceding as a specimen of many others which might be noticed; and, in the contemplation of which, the reflecting mind may find abundant opportunities of admiring the beauty and wisdom of the courses of Divine

Providence regarding the lot of man. But these aspects, if derived from just observation, will always have a reference to *actual* circumstances and events, and will but serve as *rules* to guide us in the best mode of managing these events.

We have only, then, to repeat, that the whole of the preceding observations proceeded upon the same idea which lies at the foundation of this treatise, and is indeed peculiar to it, namely, that the true duty of man lies, not amidst generalizations that have no relation to life, but in the due and skilful management, as pointed out to his notice by the aspects which events assume, of the actual circumstances amidst which he is placed, and the faithful discharge of the duties which these circumstances impose.

We thus separate the duty assigned to man from everything visionary and abstract, and place it amidst the palpable and obvious interests of actual and daily life.

ESTIMATES OF LIFE.

In stating the *aspects of life*, we merely collected certain general expressions or characters which the events of life assume, and which must be attended to, if we would properly avail ourselves of these events, so as to fulfil the duty incumbent on us as subjects of the kingdom of God, and who have it as the object proposed to us to manage these events in a suitable manner.

In proceeding to state what we term *estimates of life*, we do not consider events as thus assembled into groups marked by peculiar characters, but we compare together two things which mutually suggest each other, but which also, when the estimate is properly made, point out to us certain duties or virtues which are appropriate to our place in that department of the Divine kingdom in which we are stationed.

The things, thus to be compared or estimated, are the happinesss and misery of life, and the peculiar character of the former; the virtues and vices of life, and the peculiar character also which belongs to the former; the value of melancholy or of cheerful views of the

principles, on which the Divine government of that portion of the universe which is manifested to us is conducted; the comparative excellence of the philosophical and of the Christian idea of a perfectly wise or good man; and, lastly, the relative value or worth of the arguments for a future state, and of the different ideas we are capable of forming of its nature. These accordingly are the topics which are to form the concluding subjects of the treatise.

ESTIMATE OF THE HAPPINESS OF LIFE.

We have no intention, in this part of the Work, of discussing what the ancients called the chief good of life; and as little of attempting to determine the question, whether virtue alone be sufficient to make a man happy in all circumstances.

We consider these questions to have proceeded upon very limited and partial views of the nature of man, and of the kinds of good which are set before him; although it is true, that, in the discussion of these questions, great ingenuity was shown, and many fine speculations brought out, by the powerful and cultivated

minds which devoted themselves to the consideration of them.

Indeed, we lay it down as a principle, that Nature has furnished man with many varied sources of happiness, which must be united, in order to give to the enjoyment of life its most perfect character. For man is a being constituted by the union of many powers and capabilities; and hence, to complete his happiness, there must be in him a union of happy views of the dispensations of Providence, pure, and warm, and active affections to all the beings and objects by whom he is surrounded in life, a good conscience, or the absence of every feeling of his being engaged in a course contrary to the will and appointments of God, active employment in some reputable course of business or speculation, a certain measure of bodily health or freedom from disease, and, lastly, successful exertions in that career on which he has thought fit to employ his powers.

It is a mistake to suppose, that the possession of any one of these is sufficient to constitute a full measure of earthly enjoyment, while the others are wanting; and an idea of a perfectly happy life, in so far as that expression is applicable to the mixed and imperfect state in which man exists, can only be constituted by the union of all of these sources in their best state.

At the same time, it is true, that these, like all other circumstances of the human condition, fall to the lots of individual men in very different proportions; and that thus God seems, even in the communication of the means of happiness to his creatures, to proceed upon the same plan, by which, throughout the whole of life, he has made the condition of every one being in some respects different from that of every other.

It is important, however, that every man should be convinced, that the world is altogether a scene of far more happiness than misery; and, indeed, it is impossible for any well-disposed man to look back upon life without feeling that goodness and mercy have followed him all his days; that the more he thinks of the happiness he has enjoyed, even amidst the ills that may have fallen to his lot, the more perfect is his conviction, that beneficence, and a determination to promote the good of his creatures, is the pervading principle of all the Divine dispensations; that even evil is only used as an instrument of good; and that a song of thankfulness for the riches, and wonderful manifestations of Divine bounty, is the most suitable hymn which man can raise to the Author of all good.

Indeed, this prevalence of good over evil, or of happiness over misery, and this subserviency even of evil to good, seems to have been necessary, in order to maintain, with respect to this world, the impression among men, that it is still a portion of the boundless dominions of the Supreme Fountain of happiness; and the actual maintenance of this superiority, or, perhaps, we should rather say, the actual subserviency of all appearances of evil to good, is the most delightful and instructive conclusion at which man can arrive, with a view to the establishment of the fact, that, amidst all the perplexing appearances, and all the seeming calamities of life, he is still the subject of a Sovereign, who intends, by all his dispensations, to bless and to perfect him.

Much confusion of ideas seems to prevail among men on this subject. It is, thus, sometimes maintained, that there is an average measure of happiness which falls to the lot of all the communities and generations, and even of all the individuals of mankind; and it is, no doubt, true, and affords a pleasing subject of contemplation to remark, that the disadvantages of particular conditions, and ages, and individuals, are often beneficially compensated by sources of happiness which fall not to the lot of others,

who seem, in some respects, more highly favored. But, admitting this, there seems no ground for believing, that either all the different communities of men, or the different generations that have peopled the earth, and still less all the varied individuals of mankind, enjoy an equal, and an exactly-regulated measure of happiness. On the contrary, God seems to dispense enjoyment, not only by different means, but in different degrees; and, as some pass through life with much calmness, or even with a high relish of many sources of happiness, there are others, whose whole lives are spent amidst disease and depression, and to whom this life seems to have been given chiefly as a scene of trial and of sorrow.

These, however, are but exceptions to the general rule; and it is still true, and most important to be kept in mind by every one, that life is a scene of happiness rather than of suffering; and that, by the prevalence of the former above the latter, and even by the subserviency of the latter to the former, it is still made manifest to us, that we live in a portion of the vast empire of God, which is subject to the same principles, though these are, no doubt, adapted in their manifestations to the nature of the beings to whom they are applied, which per-

vade even the most perfect and happy worlds over which the cloudless sunshine of Divine goodness is spread.

What we chiefly wish to remark in this section, however, is the fact, that the happiness dispensed to man in this world, not only is distributed in various proportions, but, in its very nature, is of a peculiar and mixed kind; insomuch, that there is no happiness which does not partake of sorrow, and, on the other hand, there is no sorrow that has not in it a mixture of happiness.

When we speak, therefore, of the mixed nature of the happiness of life, we not only mean, that happiness and sorrow are placed side by side, or that compensating blessings spring up to the unfortunate, and disastrous events make even the prosperous sensible of the unsatisfactory nature of all earthly enjoyments, but we signify, that happiness itself has, in its very essence, a portion of sorrow, and that sorrow, also, is so constituted, as to beget a feeling of enjoyment or of endurance.

There is thus, on the one hand, *a grief* which springs even *from joy*, or a feeling of unsatisfactoriness, which is mingled with the fullest and purest draughts of bliss; and, on the other, there is a *joy* of grief, or a tendency in sorrow

to soften and improve the heart, and to act like a purifying current to all the vital energies of the soul. So much, indeed, is this the case, that the unfortunate often look back to those seasons when other men pitied them, with a persuasion, that some of their purest pleasures sprung up in their hearts at these very seasons; and, on the other hand, the prosperous have frequently no satisfaction in retracing the hours, when, to all other men, they seemed most to have been objects of envy or of admiration.

From this estimate of earthly happiness spring some of the most characteristic, also, and beautiful of the virtues which belong to the human condition; contentment, patience, resignation, humble trust in the good providence of God, humility amidst the greatest share of temporal good, hope and confidence even when the greatest of human ills are pressing on us, thankfulness for the good we are permitted to taste, and a wise and cheerful husbanding of such means or portions of enjoyment as may be put in our power.

Human nature never looks more beautiful than when seen in the exercise of these virtues; for it is the prevalence of these graces that so often makes us look on the humble retreats and by-paths of life, where the widowed, and the fatherless, the poor, the broken-hearted, and the dying, are found, as the scenes where human nature appears in its most amiable form, and from which we select those instances of true worth that give to the condition of man its best expression.

It is also by the cultivation of these virtues, whatever may be his condition or lot in life, that man best shows himself to be a subject of the kingdom of God, of that portion of the Divine dominions, of which it is the character that all good is of a mixed and uncertain kind, and also, that all evil is modified by good, or made subservient to its production.

So true is it that humility and moderation in prosperous circumstances, and contentment, and good hope in God, and a cheerful use of what is left, even in a trying and straitened condition, are among the most graceful, and valuable virtues which man can cultivate. It is, accordingly, chiefly with the view of bringing the importance of these and kindred virtues before the notice of the reader, that the foregoing

illustrations of the *peculiar* nature of the happiness that belongs to human life have been given.

ESTIMATE OF THE VIRTUE OF LIFE.

The observations we have made respecting the happiness of life lead to a series of corresponding remarks respecting the virtue that prevails in it; for, as we shall find, the happiness and the virtue that are appropriate to the human condition have a similar character.

As, then, we began our former illustration of the happiness of life, by stating that there is more of enjoyment than of suffering in the world, we also think ourselves justified in stating that there is a similar preponderance of virtue above vice, in the general estimate of human character.

History, indeed, as it has often been remarked, is chiefly occupied with the vices and the irregularities of human conduct; and when we form our estimate of human worth by *its* delineations, we may often be disposed to view this earth as but a scene over which violence and guilt have trod with unrestrained dominion.

But juster reflection will satisfy us, that there has at all times been a vast preponderance of happiness and of virtue in the world, of which history has taken no notice, but which was not on that account less real or less prevalent; and that the true excellence of the human condition has been manifested by the myriads who have solely devoted themselves to the duties of humble life, and tasted, without ambition, the ordinary share of human joys; while conquerors and legislators have pursued their course amidst delusions that neither satisfied themselves, nor were beheld with envy by those who know the value of more substantial blessings.

And as it is by the prevalence of happiness above suffering in life, as we formerly noticed, that this earth still manifests its relation to the boundless empire of the Author of all good, so is it by the proponderance of virtue in life above vice, that it asserts the same glorious relation in perhaps a still more satisfactory manner.

Indeed, as no human being is so perfect as to be without a mixture of vice and of frailty, so there is none so sunk in guilt as not also to have much that is good in his nature; perhaps we are even authorized to assert, that in all instances that which is good will be found to

have the predominance; and, at any rate, there is no human being of whom we are entitled to say, that he is unworthy of the exercise of that regenerating discipline which God exercises towards all his creatures, or that he is so lost in sin, as to have no title to be regarded as a subject of the kingdom of God.

But we have now also farther to remark, that human virtue like human happiness has a *peculiar* and appropriate character. It flows from *grief*, from the consciousness of sin, and of frailty, and is never of the best and most characteristic kind, but when this consciousness lies at the foundation of it.

Hence the excellence of the graces of humility, penitence, trust in Divine mercy, faith in him whom God has set forth as our deliverer from sin, and earnest coöperation with the Divine plans in all that he has done for our final salvation, and for raising us to the enjoyment of everlasting life, as beings delivered from guilt.

There have, indeed, been theorists who have treated these graces with derision, and who have represented them as founded on erroneous views of the condition and capabilities of human nature; and there is also a spurious sort of virtue in life, which takes no account of such

graces, but rather deems them to be marks of pusillanimity, or at least to have no tendency either to beautify human character, or to fit it for a zealous discharge of actual duties.

Still it is true that these graces of humility, and penitence, and trust in Divine mercy, and resignation to the plans of Providence, lie at the foundation of the only virtue that is genuine, the only virtue that is suited to the condition in which man exists in this world, the only virtue that is really graceful and of good report, the only virtue that is attended with sincere and heartfelt satisfaction.

All sound doctrine, consequently, must recommend these graces as the foundation and pervading essence of all the other ornaments of human character; and every good man must make it his chief study to cultivate them in his habitual tenor of life and feeling.

It is, accordingly, to the cultivation of these graces that Divine revelation has given its chief promises and rewards; and it is by the cultivation of them that man accommodates himself to his place in this interesting department of the kingdom of God, it being, as we have formerly stated, the most interesting characteristic of this department of that kingdom, that it is a kingdom of grace, of mercy,

and of forgiveness to beings who are conscious of sin, and who, consequently, must receive all blessings as gifts of the fatherly pity, and sovereign grace of God.

It is, therefore, chiefly with the view of showing the importance of cultivating these most interesting and lovely graces, the graces of humility, penitence, and trust in Divine mercy, that we have given, in this section, the foregoing illustrations of the *peculiar nature* of that virtue which is appropriate to man.

ESTIMATE OF THE COMPARATIVE VALUE OF DARK AND OF PLEASING VIEWS OF THE ORDER OF NATURE AND DISPENSATIONS OF PROVIDENCE.

There seems to be a strong tendency in the mind of man to form gloomy and austere ideas of the order of Providence, or of the principles on which the Deity conducts the dispensations of his government, and indeed of the character and attributes of the Divine mind itself; and there are several very obvious considerations that may suggest the cause of this propensity.

For, in the first place, we see but a part, and, indeed, a very small part, of the vast system of things; but, at the same time, our view is so completely limited to what we see, that we are apt to suppose that we discover the whole, and hence, to conclude respecting the nature and object of the results that we witness, not as they ought to be viewed, in their relation to higher and more extensive plans, but solely by the obvious appearances which they present to our senses.

And, in the second place, it is true that when our view of things is thus limited and partial, there is obviously a dark as well as a bright side of the order of Nature, that God often seems to speak to men by awful and striking events, and to assume the aspect rather of an offended sovereign and judge, than of a being who is essentially beneficent, or whose arrangements all point to happiness.

And from the combined operation of these two circumstances, first, our limited and partial view of the arrangements of Nature and dispensations of Providence; and, secondly, the apparently severe aspects which these arrangements unquestionably assume at certain times and in certain circumstances, it happens that we are disposed to regard the whole of these

arrangements not as means but as ends, not as corrective but vindictive, not as instruments productive of future and good purposes, but as events terminating in themselves, and perplexing man by the awful phenomenon of the apparent existence of partial evil or unhappiness in a system, which he at the same time cannot but regard as the work of a Being who is of pure and essential goodness.

No man can contemplate the views and opinions entertained by the generality of men, without perceiving that such ideas of the principles which regulate the proceedings of Providence prevail to a most melancholy extent, that they have narrowed and debased almost all the authorized systems of doctrine that have become established in the world, and that their mixture with the whole texture of human wisdom leaves much to be done, by the progress of knowledge, and by the expanding views of a refined philosophy, for the illumination and comfort of future generations. For the truth is, that the prevalence of such gloomy views is one of the most fertile sources, both to individuals and nations, of that unhappiness which it should be the object of true wisdom to remove; and no considerate man can doubt, that they produce effects of the most deplorable kind,

both on the virtue and comfort of every mind that entertains them.

They darken and perplex our ideas of the whole provisions of that kingdom in which we have our place; and, though instances of surpassing beauty of design are every where around us, and most admirable indications constantly occurring of the pure beneficence which pervades the dispensations of Providence, the effect of the views to which we are now alluding is obviously to undo all the influence of these indications; and to dispose us to regard this glorious abode of man as a vast prison-house, in which beings are detained who have incurred the anger of their Sovereign, and who may at any moment be summoned to undergo the awful effects of his indignation and revenge.

But the reverse of all this is true with respect to such views of the order of Nature, and dispensations of Providence, as are pleasing and consolatory.

For as all our gloomy ideas originate in partial and limited views of the plan of Providence, so the necessary effect of all extensive views of the arrangements of Nature is to show us more and more of the beauty, and wisdom, and pure beneficence by which all things are pervaded; and the wider our view of the order of Provi-

dence becomes, the more perfect is our conviction, that the universe is one grand scheme, throughout all the parts of which only wisdom and love are permitted to operate. All the apparent evils of life thus assume the aspect, not of ends but of means leading to future and good results; they cease to be regarded as vindictive, and become invested with the far finer and more pleasing character of provisions which are only meant to be corrective; and thus, provided we extend our view over a sufficiently wide space, these apparent disasters and perplexities lose altogether the character of evils, which they only bore while regarded as final and insulated events, and present themselves to our admiration, as instruments finely adapted by Divine Wisdom for the production of lasting and extensive good.

It is thus a truth which cannot be too carefully weighed by us, that all just and extensive views of the order of Providence lead to such ideas as are not gloomy and depressing, but pleasing and consolatory; and that, if we could take in the whole scheme of things, we should be satisfied, that the universe is but one glorious manifestation of the disposition of its Author to bless his creatures, and to conduct them to that blessedness by provisions of

wisdom most beautifully suited to the infinite variety of their capacities.

And as gloomy views have many most pernicious effects on the happiness and virtue of life, so the possession of pleasing and consolatory views is one of the best blessings that can be enjoyed by men. They enable us to think, in a becoming and worthy manner, of the provisions of that kingdom, to the honor of being subjects of which Divine Providence has raised us; they lessen the effect of all the common ills of life, and give new powers of conferring satisfaction to its enjoyments and blessings; they dispose us to enter willingly upon any course of duty that may be pointed out to us by our situation in life; and they render our whole obedience to God not the forced "subjection of slaves," but the cheerful and acceptable "homage of sons."

This is being servants of God, and subjects of his kingdom, in the highest and purest sense of these terms; and the possession of such views as are adapted to produce this effect ought, consequently, to be sought after by every man as a treasure, the value of which cannot be too highly estimated.

Our subjection to God may be sincere, even while we are actuated by the most unpleasing

conceptions of his character and government; but no service of man can be suited to the situation which he really holds in the kingdom of God, or to the relation in which he stands to the Sovereign Father, which does not proceed from happy views of his character and purposes; and it is hence that the progress of true philosophy, the effect of which is to expand, and purify, and elevate the notions of men respecting the plans of Providence, is of such unspeakable moment to human happiness.

It is a miserable mistake to suppose, that human knowledge, on this grandest of all topics, has already reached its limits, and may be restricted to the approved formulas that have been adopted by men; for the ceaseless lapse of ages may be expected to be constantly adding new accessions to human knowledge, and widening, in a proportionate degree, the sphere of contemplation over which the mind of man is permitted to expatiate; and the principle we have already stated must be kept in mind, that the more *extensive* the views of men become, the more *cheerful* and *satisfactory* will be their conceptions of the plan, according to which all things are conducted.

HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN IDEA OF A PERFECTLY WISE OR GOOD MAN COMPARED.

The ancients were much occupied in attempts to delineate the perfectly wise man; and speculative minds of all times have felt a disposition to form some *ideal* of this sort.

But the error of all these attempts has been, that the Wise Man thus conceived was *but an ideal*, having no relation to the actual duties of life, and still less to its sufferings and privations. On the contrary, this ideal was supposed to be only consistent with the condition of a being exempt from the labors and cares of life, which are always represented as too insignificant and degrading to occupy his attention; it represented the wise man as devoted chiefly to contemplation, and to the study of abstract and general ideas; it supposed, that enjoyment, rather than suffering, was to be the condition of his existence; and, finally, it was almost always formed on the belief, that all the views and happiness of the ideal which it embodied were limited to the duration of this world, and to the enjoyment of the blessings which it contains.

The grand error was, that it was merely an *ideal*, having no relation to actual duties, and utterly exempt from all labors and cares, which the very possession of its views and wisdom was supposed sufficient to overcome.

Very different, however, from all this is the Christian idea; for Christianity also has drawn the model of a perfectly wise man; and that model is embodied by it in the history of him who was its Founder. But so far is this pattern from having no relation to actual duties and trials, that it is entirely occupied with an exhibition of the manner in which labors and sorrows of the most oppressive and unceasing kind may be endured; for Christ our Pattern and Master, was poor, and sorrowful, and forsaken, "a man of sorrows," indeed, and "acquainted with grief;" he "was made perfect through suffering;" his labors and sufferings increased as he advanced in his career; but they were all met by him with the abiding impression, that his business on earth was, not to please himself, but "to do the will" of God, in the circumstances which characterized his dark and trying path; and, that his virtue might be made perfect, he was not permitted to rest from his labors till he had given evidence, that even death, in its most appalling form, could

not deter him from his course; but that, even to that last trial, though amidst an apparent desertion both of God and man, he was prepared to advance, because he believed that such was "the will of God," and that he would, in his own time and way, yet "crown him with glory and honor."

This is the Christian pattern of a perfectly wise and good man; and here we have no ideal raised above the duties and sufferings of life, as if these were unworthy of his regard, but a person exhibiting the power of high and pure principles amidst a continued series of humble labors, and distressing afflictions, through long years, during which he saw little prospect that his hopes would be realized, and, at last, by firmly addressing himself even to the endurance of death, because he perceived that that also was pointed out to him, by the providence of God, as part of the lot which his wisdom had ordained for him.

The life of the Christian wise man, therefore, supposes not repose but labor, not contemplation, or the mere indulgence of sentiments and feelings, however pure and sublime, but active and strong exertions in their most depressing and continued forms; not the mere enjoyment of comfort and of human happiness in its full-

est measure, but the renunciation of all personal indulgences, from a habitual belief, that man must do that which his circumstances in life call him to do, however hard it may be "to flesh and blood;" and, finally, not a prospect limited by the endurance of a mere earthly existence, but a view stretching beyond all terrestrial things into the future and everlasting realities of the kingdom of God.

Life thus becomes, in the Christian idea of it, something far more solemn and deeply momentous than as it was exhibited by any former systems of doctrine; something demanding for the due management of it far higher principles of action and endurance; and productive, also, of far more extensive results; being but the opening of a course which is to go on for ever, and the commencement of trials and labors, which are to prolong their consequences into invisible glories of the heavenly kingdom.

This is the only true idea of a perfectly good life; for any exhibition of such a life, which has no relation to hard labor and sore affliction, has also, by this very supposition, no relation to that *human condition* of which it is supposed to be a specimen; and hence we may see what truly Divine Wisdom pervades the Christian system, which has given to the life of the high-

est and purest of all the Beings who have ever been set forth as the model of conduct to men, not the inapplicable perfection of a merely ideal excellence, but the exhibition of a style of action and suffering which had, throughout all its parts, a reference to the ordinary trials of life in their most depressing and humiliating forms.

Here indeed we see the same Divine Wisdom made apparent which is conspicuous throughout all the other parts of our faith; and so true is this representation of what is really most excellent in human conduct, that in the ordinary course of life, Providence seems to have intended to justify its own representations, as these are given in the Christian views, by often exhibiting the very best specimens of human nature spending all their days amidst disease, and sorrow, and disappointment; and after having tasted but little of the comforts of this world, and known none of its honors or its glories, at last passing to the great reversion which awaited them, through sufferings which sometimes seem too much for flesh and blood, and which can only therefore be viewed as a prelude to a "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

And hence, in the last place, we may see how fully the principle which pervades this

treatise is confirmed by the Christian idea of the perfectly wise man; for this Christian pattern has, in all its parts, a relation *to action* and *suffering;* and the principle we have endeavoured to establish is, that active duty, or the proper management of the circumstances amidst which our lot in life has stationed us, and not the indulgence of mere sentiments or feelings, however pure or sublime these may be, is the true duty prescribed to man, and by the discharge of which he must approve himself "a loyal and true subject of the Divine kingdom."

LIFE, THE DAWNING OF AN ETERNAL DAY.

The views exhibited in the preceding section are well entitled to a more full and lengthened examination than we have now bestowed on them, and ought to be made familiar to all Christian minds; because, as we have already said, they represent life to us not only as something far more solemn and momentous, and demanding more strenuous exertion than, in our common views of it, we are disposed to

believe, but also because they present it to us as having far more extensive relations, and as but the opening of a course of service and labor which is to issue in corresponding blessedness, when the kingdom of God shall have more fully evolved its capacities.

Labor and suffering, according to the views we have exhibited, are essential parts of that condition in which we are at present placed; and, throughout the progress of life, labor and suffering are found to issue, when our view is sufficiently extended, in the production and enjoyment of good. But the labors and sorrows of life increase to the end, and the hardest and most humiliating of all our trials and struggles are those which terminate our connexion with all temporal things. Yet God cannot be conceived as acting on a different principle when life is closing, and our strength is put to the severest trial, from that which had pervaded and given beauty to all his previous dispensations; and we may therefore rest in the assurance, that the extreme hardship of our last trial in life was but intended as an intimation that God is preparing, by the issue of that trial, eventually "to perfect that which concerneth us."

More generally our destiny is evidently not concluded on this earth; and life, without some future and greater disclosure of its plan, would be not only an inexplicable, but a most melancholy and disheartening enigma; and hence we are entitled to conclude, that some great plan is yet to be evolved, in which it will be made manifest, that not only the interests of the entire race of man, but of all individuals, have been most mercifully and gloriously consulted.

This argument deserves our serious attention in endeavouring to come to a satisfactory conclusion on this grandest and most interesting of all topics, and it is perhaps the most satisfactory of all arguments. It is an appeal to the heart and affections, and to all the best hopes and sentiments of man; it is the consideration, therefore, that, independent of all forms of reasoning, will ever produce the deepest impression on his mind, that will best influence all his actions and plans, and that will not be rooted out from his nature by any sophistry either of other men, or of his own darkened understanding.

What the precise condition of our future being is to be we cannot tell; nor what revolutions the glorious empire of God is yet to un-

dergo; for God has wisely determined, and in this determination he but adheres to the principle which has guided all his conduct towards us during life, that his plan shall *evolve itself*, and that our duty lies in strenuously devoting ourselves to whatever labors or trials our present circumstances may impose, with humble *confidence* in the benevolence of his appointments for what may be future in our history.

Some representations, indeed, of the actual circumstances of our future being may be better adapted to interest our *human affections*, and thus to influence our conduct than others; and when they have this effect they deserve to be embraced, as tending to the same result which we are now pointing out as aimed at by the whole of the arrangements of Divine Providence on this subject; for God, we have seen, has not sought so much to gratify our curiosity as to give us such *impressions* as shall have the deepest, the most salutary, and the most abiding influence on our conduct.

It is indeed but *a vain* curiosity which we commonly indulge on this subject; and did we better understand our own powers, and the nature of our present condition, we should be satisfied that God has not only done everything for our satisfaction which the present condition

of our being permitted, but that the assurance he has given us, applied as it is to our most *natural and indelible sentiments, and feelings, and hopes*, is indeed the best of all the intimations which could have been afforded us.

We know enough for Faith, and Hope, and Comfort amidst all human ills, and Encouragement amidst all human labors; this, however, was chiefly what was important for us to know; and though we cannot determine what the condition of our future place in existence shall be, or through what wonderful revolutions the Divine kingdom is yet to pass, we have every reason for believing, and for trusting in the assurance, that all its revolutions, and all their effects upon us, shall be in harmony with perfect wisdom, and equity, and truth, and goodness.

In these convictions it becomes us to labor and to endure while life is granted to us; and in these convictions we may meet our departure from this scene of labor and of suffering not only with calmness but with triumph.

Life is thus seen to reflect some gleams of brightness on the reality of eternity, and eternity throws back a flood of glory on the scenes and shadows of time; for now we are entitled to consider these two as but portions of one plan of surpassing glory and extent, and this

earth as but the peristyle of a grand *Temple*, into the inner-court of which we are to be ushered, when "this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality."

THE END.

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